

**LENIN'S  
FIGHT AGAINST  
REVISIONISM AND  
OPPORTUNISM**

Compiled by  
Cheng Yen-shih

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS PEKING





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## 1. REPUDIATING ECONOMISM AND BERNSTEINISM

### THE STRATEGIC REVOLUTIONARY TASK OF THE PROLETARIAT

Lenin was still in his youth when he embarked on the revolutionary road in the late 1880s. Russia was then under the brutal, reactionary rule of tsarist autocracy. The labouring masses, the workers and peasants, were cruelly exploited and deprived of all political rights. The proletariat, which grew with the development of capitalism, began to organize mass strikes. These were the circumstances in which Marxism began to spread in Russia and the first Marxist circles came into being. But these Marxist circles had very few connections with the working-class movement, and were not yet aware of the necessity of conducting propaganda and agitation among the workers. The basic, immediate task of the Russian Marxists then was to unite socialism with the working-class movement and weld the scattered Marxist circles into a united workers' party. The next steps would be to lead the proletariat to overthrow the tsarist autocracy, to bring about the socialist revolution and to build a socialist society.

Among the Russian Marxists at that time, the great Lenin was the one with the profoundest and clearest understanding of these historical tasks. In 1894, he wrote



"What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats<sup>1</sup>", in which he said:

When its advanced representatives have mastered the ideas of scientific socialism, the idea of the historical role of the Russian worker, when these ideas become widespread, and when stable organisations are formed among the workers to transform the workers' present sporadic economic war into conscious class struggle — then the Russian **WORKER**, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the **RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT** (side by side with the proletariat of **ALL COUNTRIES**) *along the straight road of open political struggle to* **THE VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION.**<sup>2</sup>

This was the strategic revolutionary task which Lenin very explicitly placed before the Russian proletariat and the Marxists, and he waged a bitter struggle against all anti-Marxist trends for its realization.

Narodism was then the chief obstacle to the spread of Marxism and the founding of a Marxist workers' party. It denied the inevitability of capitalism developing in Russia, refused to recognize the proletariat as the most advanced and most revolutionary class, and despised the great strength of the masses and preached individual terrorism. Plekhanov and his Emancipation of Labour group dealt a decisive blow to the Narodniks, but the destruction of Narodism in the ideological field was far from complete. This task fell to Lenin. In his work "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They

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<sup>1</sup> At that time "Social-Democrats" was the name used by the Communists. — *Tr.*

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 1, p. 300.

Fight the Social-Democrats", Lenin thoroughly refuted the theories and political programme of the Narodniks, expounded the theory that the proletariat is the most advanced and revolutionary class in society, and for the first time advanced the idea of an alliance between the Russian workers and peasants as the principal means of overthrowing tsardom, the landlords and the bourgeoisie. He pointed out that the Narodniks of the nineties had renounced revolutionary struggle against the tsarist government and had begun to preach reconciliation with it, and that far from being the "friends of the people", they were in fact spokesmen of the kulaks.

Lenin smashed Narodist ideology. He also made a thorough critique of "legal Marxism". The "legal Marxists" tried to use the fight against Narodism to subordinate the working-class movement to the interests of the bourgeoisie. Peter Struve, a prominent "legal Marxist", was an apologist for capitalism which he extolled; he urged that "we acknowledge our lack of culture and go to capitalism for schooling". Lenin pointed out that these "legal Marxists" were bourgeois liberals who were trying to change Marxism into bourgeois reformism, ignored class contradictions and renounced the theory of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

#### THE FIGHT AGAINST ECONOMISM WITH ITS WORSHIP OF SPONTANEITY AND ITS OBSESSION WITH ECONOMIC STRUGGLES

The successor to "legal Marxism" was economism, which in turn became prevalent. In 1897 Lenin was sent into exile by the tsarist government to a remote village

in Siberia. He closely followed the activities of the "Economists". In 1899 a group of "Economists" issued a manifesto, in which they maintained that the workers should engage only in economic struggles and leave political struggles to the bourgeois liberals, and they opposed the founding of a political party of the proletariat. When Lenin read this manifesto, he called a meeting of the Marxist political exiles living in the vicinity, who adopted "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats" which Lenin drafted. Subsequently, he wrote a series of articles including "Our Programme" and "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy". After his term of exile ended, Lenin went abroad and in 1902 completed his famous work "What Is to Be Done?". In these writings he sharply denounced the "Economists" for their betrayal of Marxism and called on Marxists to wage a resolute struggle against them, to establish a revolutionary political party of the proletariat and to conduct political struggle against tsarism.

The fundamental error of the "Economists" was their subservience to the spontaneity of the working-class movement. They believed that an independent ideology could arise of itself out of the working-class movement. They accused the Marxists of "belittling the significance of the objective or the spontaneous element of development", "overrating the importance of ideology" and exaggerating the role of the conscious element. Lenin argued that socialist ideology cannot be formulated spontaneously by the working masses, and, by their own efforts alone, they are able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions and fight the employers and to compel the government to pass necessary legislation, etc.

Socialist ideology can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge and is introduced to the workers from without. The workers very readily accept socialism because of their social status. However, bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, is more fully developed and has at its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination. Therefore, in opposing the inculcation of a scientific socialist consciousness into the workers, the "Economists" were in fact helping the bourgeoisie to spread their ideological influence. Lenin wrote:

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the *only* choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course. . . . Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology.<sup>1</sup>

He also said:

. . . *all* worship of the spontaneity of the working-class movement, all belittling of the role of "the conscious element", of the role of Social-Democracy, means, quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not, a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin pointed out that to belittle the role of revolutionary theory and of the Party would result in burying the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, because "there

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<sup>1</sup> "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 5, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 382-83.

can be no strong socialist party without a revolutionary theory",<sup>1</sup> and "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement".<sup>2</sup>

The "Economists" asserted that the watchword for the working-class movement was "Struggle for economic conditions", that a kopek added to a ruble was worth more than any socialism or politics, and that when the workers fought, they must know that "they are fighting, not for the sake of some future generation, but for themselves and their children".<sup>3</sup> To defend themselves the "Economists" argued that "according to the theories of Marx and Engels the economic interests of certain classes play a decisive role in history, and, *consequently*, . . . particularly the proletariat's struggle for its economic interests must be of paramount importance in its class development and struggle for emancipation".<sup>4</sup> Refuting these arguments Lenin said:

The fact that economic interests play a decisive role *does not in the least imply* that the economic (i.e., trade-union) struggle is of prime importance; for the most essential, the "decisive" interests of classes can be satisfied *only* by radical *political* changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied only by a political revolution that will replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Programme", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> "What Is to Be Done?", *op. cit.*, p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "What Is to Be Done?", *ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote on p. 390.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote on pp. 390-91.

To confine the task of the proletariat to the economic struggle meant to confine the workers to the position of eternal slavery, unable to rid themselves of tsarist autocracy and bury capitalism. This, of course, did not in any sense mean that Marxists should belittle the significance of economic struggles. Lenin pointed out that the Social-Democrats must organize working-class economic struggles. "But to forget the political struggle for the economic would mean to depart from the basic principle of international Social-Democracy, it would mean to forget what the entire history of the labour movement teaches us."<sup>1</sup> For Social-Democracy to confine its activity to the economic struggle was tantamount to political suicide. "There is not and never has been a Social-Democracy anywhere in the world that is not inseparably and indivisibly bound up with the political struggle. Social-Democracy without the political struggle is a river without water. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

It was true that the "Economists" did not exclude politics altogether. They even spoke about the necessity of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character". But as Lenin pointed out:

. . . the pompous phrase about "lending the economic struggle *itself* a political character", which sounds so "terrifically" profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving to *degrade* Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade-union politics.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Programme", *op. cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> "Apropos of the *Profession de foi*", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> "What Is to Be Done?", *op. cit.*, p. 405.

Trade Union politics worked to improve the conditions of labour through "legislative and administrative measures" without touching the capitalist system. As Lenin said, they were the bourgeois politics of the working class and very, very far from socialist. The revolutionary Social-Democratic Party always included the struggle for reforms among its activities, but the workers were not "children to be fed on the thin gruel of 'economic' politics alone". It was necessary to raise the initial political consciousness the workers acquired in economic struggles to the height of socialist, political consciousness and to subordinate the partial struggle for reforms to the entire revolutionary struggle for freedom and socialism.

In matters of organization, the worship of spontaneity was manifested in the praise lavished by the "Economists" on the prevailing organizational disunity, and in the clannish outlook of the Marxist circles and their amateurishness. Since the "Economists" insisted that the task of the proletariat was merely to wage economic struggles against the employers and the government, they saw no need to establish a national, centralized, revolutionary organization. Lenin gave a profound explanation of why it was necessary to establish a centralized, united, revolutionary party of the proletariat. He said, "... the spontaneous struggle of the proletariat will not become its genuine 'class struggle' until this struggle is led by a strong organisation of revolutionaries."<sup>1</sup> He declared, "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia!"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 475.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 467.

In his struggle against the "Economists", Lenin systematically clarified the relationship between political and economic struggle, and showed the decisive role of political struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. He raised the role of theory and the role of the Party to their proper level, and expounded the fundamental thesis that the Party is the product of the integration of the working-class movement with scientific socialism.

THE OPPORTUNISTS OF ALL COUNTRIES PRAISE  
EACH OTHER AND COME OUT TOGETHER  
AGAINST MARXISM

Economism was the Russian variety of Bernsteinism. While criticizing Economism, Lenin also criticized Bernsteinism.

The German Social-Democrat Bernstein was the first to gave full and integral expression to "revision" of the fundamental theories of Marxism. In 1896-98 he published a series of articles under the general title "Problems of Socialism". In 1899 these articles appeared in a book entitled *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of Social-Democracy*. In these articles Bernstein opposed proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Millerand, a leader of the French Socialist Party, provided an "excellent example" of practical Bernsteinism, for he joined the reactionary, bourgeois cabinet of which General Gallifet, the butcher of the Communards, was also a member. Opportunists sprang up everywhere in the international working-class movement as opponents of the revolutionaries. Lenin considered the revolutionaries and the opportunists among the pro-



letariat comparable to the Jacobins and the Girondists in the French revolution of the 18th century. He said:

. . . the strife of the various trends within the socialist movement has from national become international. . . . the English Fabians, the French Ministerialists, the German Bernsteinians, and the Russian Critics — all belong to the same family, all extol each other, learn from each other, and together take up arms against “dogmatic” Marxism.<sup>1</sup>

He said further:

Hitherto the doctrines of Marx and Engels were considered to be the firm foundation of revolutionary theory, but voices are now being raised everywhere to proclaim these doctrines inadequate and obsolete.<sup>2</sup>

The Bernsteinians proclaimed that it was necessary to “renovate” Marxism. How did they do it? In his *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of Social-Democracy* Bernstein put forward the following views:

1. “. . . I do not . . . make the victory of socialism dependent upon its ‘imminent economic necessity’, but on the contrary hold it to be neither possible nor necessary to give it a purely materialistic justification.”<sup>3</sup>

2. “Either a relatively growing decrease in the number of capitalists and an increasing wealth in the proletariat, or a numerous middle class — these are the only

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, footnote on pp. 352-53.

<sup>2</sup> “Our Programme”, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, I. H. W. Dietz Nachf. G.m.b.H., Berlin, p. 246.

alternatives which the continued increase of production allows."<sup>1</sup>

3. "... the enormously increased wealth of the European states, in conjunction with the elasticity of the modern credit system and the rise of industrial Kartels, has so limited the reacting force of local or individual disturbances that, at least for some time, general commercial crises similar to the earlier ones are to be regarded as improbable."<sup>2</sup> "... there is no urgent reason for concluding that such a crisis will come to pass for purely economic reasons."<sup>3</sup>

4. "... the more the political organizations of modern nations are democratised the more the needs and opportunities of great political catastrophes are diminished."<sup>4</sup> "... social democracy would flourish far better by lawful than by unlawful means and by violent revolution."<sup>5</sup>

5. "... the movement means everything for me and that what is *usually* called 'the final aim of socialism' is nothing. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

As soon as he had read Bernstein's book, Lenin wrote angrily:

. . . its contents amaze us more and more. Theoretically — incredibly weak; repetition of other people's ideas. Phrases about criticism, and not even an attempt at serious and independent criticism. In practice

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<sup>1</sup> Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, London, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xv.

— opportunism . . . unlimited opportunism and possibilism, and *cowardly* opportunism, at that. . . . One can hardly doubt that it will be a fiasco.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on Bernstein's "new" arguments and reasonings, Lenin said:

Denied was the possibility of putting socialism on a scientific basis and of demonstrating its necessity and inevitability from the point of view of the materialist conception of history. Denied was the fact of growing impoverishment, the process of proletarianisation, and the intensification of capitalist contradictions; the very concept, "*ultimate aim*", was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completely rejected. Denied was the antithesis in principle between liberalism and socialism. Denied was *the theory of the class struggle*, on the alleged grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society governed according to the will of the majority, etc.<sup>2</sup>

The essence of Bernsteinism was an attempt to tamper with the theory of Marxism and to vulgarize it, to substitute reforms for revolutionary struggle and to turn the revolutionary party of the workers into a reformist party.

Lenin made a penetrating analysis of the relationship between reform and revolution. He said:

Revolutionaries, of course, will never reject the struggle for reforms, the struggle to capture even minor and unimportant enemy positions, *if* these will serve

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<sup>1</sup> "To M. A. Uliyanova", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 37, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> "What Is to Be Done?", *op. cit.*, p. 353.

to strengthen the attack and help to achieve full victory. But they will never forget that sometimes the enemy himself surrenders a certain position in order to disunite the attacking party and thus to defeat it more easily. They will never forget that only by constantly having the "ultimate aim" in view, only by appraising every step of the "movement" and every reform from the point of view of the general revolutionary struggle, is it possible to guard the movement against false steps and shameful mistakes.<sup>1</sup>

In his article "Our Programme", Lenin solemnly declared:

We take our stand entirely on the Marxist theoretical position. . . . It made clear the real task of a revolutionary socialist party: not to draw up plans for re-fashioning society, not to preach to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of the workers, not to hatch conspiracies, *but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society.*<sup>2</sup>

Lenin showed up the Bernsteinians' threadbare arguments about the so-called "renovation" of Marxism and "freedom of criticism". Their "renovation" of Marxism was in fact nothing but fragments of backward theory borrowed from the bourgeois press, "the theory of concession — concession to the most vicious enemies of the

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<sup>1</sup> "The Persecutors of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalism", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 5, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, pp. 210-11.

proletariat, the governments and bourgeois parties who never tire of seeking new means of baiting the socialists".<sup>1</sup> The "freedom of criticism" of Marxism that they demanded was actually the freedom from all integral and deeply thought-out theory and the freedom to introduce bourgeois ideology into the socialist movement. Their opposition to "dogmatism" and "ossification of thought" was simply a cover to hide their theoretical impotence, an anti-Marxist tactic. Lenin said:

What a handy little word "dogma" is! One need only slightly twist an opposing theory, cover up this twist with the bogey of "dogma" — and there you are!<sup>2</sup>

He went on to say:

The shouts will rise that we want to convert the socialist party into an order of "true believers" that persecutes "heretics" for deviations from "dogma," for every independent opinion, and so forth. We know about all these fashionable and trenchant phrases. Only there is not a grain of truth or sense in them.<sup>3</sup>

Lenin ruthlessly combated revisionism and defended the purity of Marxism. At the same time, he held that it was necessary to study Marxism in a creative way and to enrich it with the practical experience of revolutionary struggle. He said:

We do not regard Marx's theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> "Revolutionary Adventurism", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 6, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> "Our Programme", *op. cit.*, p. 211.

science which socialists *must* develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life.<sup>1</sup>

He stressed the "*independent* elaboration of Marx's theory", because "this theory provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular*, are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than in Germany, and in Germany differently than in Russia".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 211-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

## 2. THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CREATION OF A REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAN PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

### THE TWO DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED LINES WITH REGARD TO THE BUILDING OF THE PARTY

While clearing away the ideological obstacles, Lenin did a tremendous amount of organizational work for the creation of a party of the proletariat.

The League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was organized in the autumn of 1895 in St. Petersburg under the leadership of Lenin, and it began to unite socialism with the working-class movement in Russia. It was the rudiment of the revolutionary party of the Russian proletariat. In 1898 the Leagues of Struggle of St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev together with those of other areas convened the First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. However, this congress was unable to overcome the amateurishness and clannish outlook of the Marxist circles that still prevailed and thus did not really succeed in building the party.

While in exile, Lenin gave careful consideration to the problem of creating a militant, revolutionary proletarian party of a new type and worked out a detailed plan to this end. He maintained that in order to form a united Marxist party, there had to be a thorough ideological break with the "Economists", and the building of such

a party had to be placed on the solid basis of Marxism. He said:

Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore the founding of the Party had to begin with the founding of a party organ that would propagate revolutionary, Marxist ideas. This organ had to establish close links with the local organizations, through a network of agents. He stated:

Without such an organ, local work will remain narrowly "amateurish." The formation of the Party — if the correct representation of that Party in a certain newspaper is not organised — will to a considerable extent remain bare words.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of Lenin's painstaking work, the newspaper *Iskra* was finally published in December 1900. It conducted a sharp struggle against the enemies of Marxism; among the advanced proletarians it developed a spirit of loyalty to revolutionary theory and an uncompromising attitude to opportunism. That was why it "earned the honour of being detested by the opportunists, both Russian and West-European".<sup>3</sup> In addition, it succeeded in coalescing the scattered Marxist circles and prepared the way for the convening of the Second Party Congress.

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<sup>1</sup> "Declaration of the Editorial Board of *Iskra*", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> "Our Immediate Task", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, pp. 218-19.

<sup>3</sup> "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 7, pp. 413-14.



In the process of creating the Marxist party, Lenin carried on a resolute struggle against the Mensheviks (the immediate successors to the "Economists" both ideologically and organizationally) and the opportunists of the Second International.

The overwhelming majority of the Parties of the Second International were established in a period of relatively "peaceful" development of capitalism. None of the programmes of these Parties contained a clause on the dictatorship of the proletariat. Their organizational principles served the needs of "legal" activity and parliamentary struggle, and there was no strict discipline in these Parties. The parliamentary group of the Party was not bound by the decisions of the Party central committee, and the central organs of the Party were allowed to pursue a line different from that of its central committee. The Party was not regarded as the highest of all forms of organization of the proletariat. The Party organization was in fact an appendage of the parliamentary group. In the circumstances, there was an influx into the Parties of the Second International of unstable elements among the workers, of labour aristocrats, petty-bourgeois elements and bourgeois intellectuals, bringing about a growth of opportunism. Parties of this kind could not possibly lead the proletariat in revolutionary struggle for the seizing of state power and the enforcement of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What kind of proletarian party should be built in Russia? Serious differences arose, at first between Lenin and Plekhanov on the question of the Party Programme, and later between Lenin and Martov and his followers on the question of the Party Rules.

In Plekhanov's draft of the Party Programme, no mention was made of the dictatorship of the proletariat, nor was the role of the working class clearly defined. Lenin fought these opportunist errors with great firmness. At his insistence, the most important clause—the dictatorship of the proletariat—was added to the draft Party Programme, and the leading role of the working class in the revolution was stated explicitly. He said later that the clear insertion in the programme of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat was also for the purpose of opposing Bernsteinism. In accordance with his view that a firm worker-peasant alliance had to be established, Lenin also advocated support for the peasants' demand for land. It was he who proposed all the land question clauses in the draft Party Programme.

With regard to principles of Party organization, Martov and Co. tried to copy those of the Social-Democratic Parties in the West. Lenin on the contrary maintained that the experience of the Social-Democratic Parties of Western Europe should be treated critically. He pointed out in 1899:

The history of socialism and democracy in Western Europe, the history of the Russian revolutionary movement, the experience of our working-class movement—such is the *material* we must master to elaborate a purposeful organisation and purposeful tactics for our Party. "The analysis" of this material must, however, be done independently, since there are no ready-made models to be found anywhere.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Immediate Task", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 217.

And in 1901, Lenin indicated the need to form a strong and centralized Party, "capable of leading the preparatory struggle, every unexpected outbreak, and, finally, the decisive assault".<sup>1</sup>

The serious differences with regard to the line for building the Party became accentuated at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in July 1903, when the Party Rules were discussed. Lenin's formulation of the first paragraph of the Rules was:

A member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who accepts its programme and who supports the Party both financially and by personal *participation in one of the Party organisations*.<sup>2</sup>

Martov's formulation, however, while admitting that acceptance of the programme and financial support of the Party were indispensable conditions of Party membership, maintained that a Party member need not necessarily participate in one of the Party organizations. Martov and his adherents also demanded "autonomism", as against centralized, unified leadership, asserting that the local Party organizations did not have to submit to the decisions of the centre. What they wanted was an amorphous, heterogeneous and loose Party. Lenin fought the Martovites. He held that to create an organized, disciplined, centralized and united Party, it was necessary to insist on the participation of Party members in one of the Party organizations and to keep firmly to the

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<sup>1</sup>"A Talk with Defenders of Economism", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 5, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup>"Account of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 7, p. 27.

organizational principle that the local organizations should submit to the centre, the lower organizations to the higher organizations, and the minority to the majority. When the congress came to elect the central institutions of the Party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party split into two opposing groups, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Lenin later wrote, "As a trend of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism exists since 1903."<sup>1</sup>

Plekhanov supported Lenin's formulation in the discussion of the Party Rules. After the congress, the Mensheviks did their utmost to frustrate the decisions of the congress and carried on activities against the Bolsheviks. Plekhanov advocated reconciliation with the Mensheviks and soon became a Menshevik himself. With his help, the Mensheviks usurped the leadership of the *Iskra* editorial board and converted it into their own organ in the fight against Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In the columns of the new *Iskra*, the Mensheviks conducted unrestrained propaganda in favour of permitting "free" groups and individuals within the ranks of the Party, without any obligation to submit to the decisions of the Party organization, and that "every striker" and every intellectual who sympathized with the Party should be allowed to declare himself a Party member. They accused Lenin of "bureaucracy" and "formalism", of trying to establish "serfdom" in the Party. In defence of the organizational principles of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, Lenin wrote "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", in which he criticized the opportunism of both the Men-

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<sup>1</sup> "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 345.

sheviks and the Second International on the question of the organizational line.

Lenin indicated that opportunism in matters of organization "seeks to lessen the responsibility of individual intellectuals to the party of the proletariat, to lessen the influence of the central institutions, to enlarge the autonomy of the least steadfast elements in the Party, to reduce organisational relations to a purely platonic and verbal acceptance of them".<sup>1</sup> This opportunist trend, he added, had expressed itself everywhere in the Social-Democratic Parties of the European countries and had led to the disintegration of the Party organizations. The struggle between the opportunist and the revolutionary wing of the Party represented the conflict "between the tendency to relax and the tendency to tighten organisation and discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and that of the staunch proletarian, between intellectualist individualism and proletarian solidarity".<sup>2</sup> Organizationally, the opportunism of the Mensheviks lay in their denial of the great role of organization in the proletariat's struggle for socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and this organizational opportunism served their opportunist political line.

In this work Lenin outlined the fundamental organizational principles indispensable for the establishment of a militant, centralized, disciplined and revolutionary party of the proletariat, and comprehensively elaborated the theory of the Party. He pointed out that the Party is the vanguard detachment of the proletariat, and to direct

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<sup>1</sup> "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 7, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

the struggle of the working class effectively, it must be armed with Marxist theory and the knowledge of the laws of social development and the laws of class struggle. As an organized detachment, the Party is the highest of all forms of organization of the proletariat. It can and should guide all the other organizations of the working class. It must maintain close contact with the broad masses and win their confidence. Its organization must be monolithic, with unity of will, unity of action and unity of discipline, and it must be organized on the principle of centralism. With such a Party, Lenin held, the proletariat will become an invincible force, capable of engaging in struggle and achieving its aims. He wrote:

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. . . . the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation, which welds millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the senile rule of the Russian autocracy nor the senescent rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army.<sup>1</sup>

The Bolshevik Party was built precisely in accordance with Lenin's theory of the Party and was fundamentally different from the reformist parties of the Second International. It was built on the solid basis of Marxism. It struggled unswervingly against all kinds of opportunism and for the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. This Party led by Lenin provided a brilliant example for all proletarian Parties of the world

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

and furnished all Marxists with a strong bulwark against international opportunism.

THE GROSS INTERFERENCE OF THE SECOND  
INTERNATIONAL IS REBUFFED AND THE  
BOLSHEVIK PARTY MAINTAINS ITS  
INDEPENDENCE AND PURITY

In the midst of the fierce struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, the opportunists of the Second International rushed to the support of the Mensheviks, their partners in Russia, and opposed Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Kautsky declared his support for Martov and his opposition to Lenin in a Menshevik paper in May 1904. He distorted the facts and reprimanded Lenin for "expelling" the Mensheviks from the editorial board of *Iskra* at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (actually they failed to be re-elected). Almost all the papers of the Parties of the Second International sided with the Mensheviks and published distorted reports about the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Lenin therefore regarded it as an important task to explain the real state of affairs inside the Russian Party to the international proletariat and to expose the deceptive propaganda of the opportunists. At the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in August 1904, the Bolsheviks presented a report entitled *Material for an Understanding of the Party Crisis in the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Russia*, which Lenin helped to compile and edit. The report explained that the participation of Party members in one of the Party organizations, as stipulated in the Party Rules drafted

by Lenin, had drawn on the bitter lessons of the German Social-Democrats, for disruptors had made wide use of the absence of such a stipulation in Article One of the German Party Rules. In June 1905, Lenin wrote an open letter to the editorial board of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, in which he said that Kautsky's "picture of the relations that exist in the Russian Social-Democracy is a highly distorted one"<sup>1</sup> and that "Kautsky has no right to speak about his impartiality. He has always been partial as regards the present struggle within the Russian Social-Democracy. This is his right, of course. But one who is partial would do better not to speak too much of impartiality, if he does not want to be accused of hypocrisy."<sup>2</sup> Then he gave a word of warning to all the German Social-Democrats:

Comrades! If you really consider the R.S.D.L.P. to be a fraternal party, do not believe a word of what the so-called impartial Germans tell you about our split. Insist on seeing the documents, the authentic documents.<sup>3</sup>

Lenin called on the Bolsheviks to conduct an extensive campaign to bring the correct stand taken by the Bolshevik Party to the attention of all workers' study circles abroad and members of foreign Social-Democratic Parties.

Apart from propaganda, the Second International took a series of organizational measures in support of the Mensheviks. The Amsterdam Congress had adopted a decision to establish united Social-Democratic Parties, but

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<sup>1</sup> "Open Letter to the Editorial Board of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 8, p. 531.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 532.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 532-33.



had not specified on what basis this unity was to be built. After the congress, in February 1905, the Bureau of the Second International (the International Socialist Bureau) decided to set up an arbitration committee headed by Bebel to "mediate" between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and establish "unity". To accept such "arbitration" was tantamount to recognizing that the Second International (in fact, the German Party) had the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Russian Party. One of the conditions made by this committee was that the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks should "stop debating". This meant that the Bolsheviks should stop exposing the Mensheviks and give up their struggle against opportunism. Lenin firmly rejected this "arbitration" and proposed that the dispute between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks should be settled by a congress of the Russian Party. In June 1905 the I.S.B. again raised the question of "arbitration". Lenin replied that the "mediation" of the I.S.B. could not begin until negotiations between the two sections produced results.

Thanks to Lenin's firm, principled stand and his resistance to the gross interference of the Second International, the Bolshevik Party maintained its independence and purity and increasingly extended its influence on the international communist movement.





### 3. THE FIGHT AGAINST THE OPPORTUNIST TACTICAL LINE IN THE 1905 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

#### THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE DIFFERENCES OVER THE TACTICAL LINE

Lenin predicted in 1902:

History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks confronting the proletariat of any country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the first great revolutionary battle of the Russian proletariat for the overthrow of tsarist autocracy began in 1905.

This revolution was hastened by the Russo-Japanese War which broke out in 1904, the culmination of protracted contention between tsarist Russia and Japan for the seizure of China and Korea. The attitude of the Bolsheviks towards this imperialist war and the attitude of the Mensheviks were completely different. The Mensheviks sank into the position of "defencism" and advo-

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<sup>1</sup> "What Is to Be Done?", *op. cit.*, p. 373.

cated defence of the "fatherland", i.e., the fatherland of the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, flayed the aggressive war of the tsarist government. Lenin declared that the policy pursued by the tsarist government was one of "foolish and criminal colonial adventure"<sup>1</sup> and that "it was the Russian autocracy . . . that started this colonial war".<sup>2</sup> Lenin's view was that to help bring about the defeat of the tsarist government in the war would weaken tsardom and hasten the onset of the revolutionary storm. "The military debacle, therefore," he said, "could not but precipitate a profound political crisis."<sup>3</sup>

And this is precisely how events worked out. The war deepened the internal class antagonisms in Russia and rapidly accentuated the fighting spirit of the masses. The bloodbath on January 9, 1905, when the tsarist police and troops slaughtered workers demonstrating peacefully in St. Petersburg, killing and wounding them in thousands, aroused the labouring masses to powerful indignation and touched off great strikes and demonstrations. An all-Russia political strike broke out in October. Soviets of Workers' Deputies were organized by the workers in the course of the struggles. In December, the Moscow workers staged an armed uprising. They erected barricades in the streets and engaged the tsarist police and troops in fierce battle. That same year peasants in over one-third of the *uyezds* (districts) in Russia rose against the rule of the tsar and the landlords. In June and November, sailors' revolts broke out on the battleship *Potemkin*

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<sup>1</sup> "The Fall of Port Arthur", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 8, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

near Odessa and elsewhere. There was unrest among the troops in a number of cities. The revolutionary tide swept the whole country. To give direct guidance to the Russian revolution Lenin returned to St. Petersburg from abroad in November 1905.

The revolutionary upsurge forced every political party to clarify its attitude and decide on its line of action. Shortly after the January 9 incident Lenin pointed out that the fundamental task at that time was to arm the proletariat and the peasants and to prepare and organize armed revolt for the overthrow of the tsarist government and the establishment of a revolutionary, democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. Under Lenin's leadership, the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party met in London in April 1905, adopted resolutions and worked out a Marxist tactical line. The Bolshevik tactics were designed to advance the revolution and embodied the spirit of daring to fight and daring to seize victory. The Mensheviks refused to take part in this congress and, while it was in progress, held their own conference in Geneva, at which they adopted resolutions and worked out an opportunist tactical line. Their tactics showed that they did not dare to fight and seize victory, but sought to place the proletariat under the control of the liberal bourgeoisie and to betray the revolution.

The development of the revolution brought to the fore the differences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks on the question of the tactical line. A thorough refutation of the Menshevik tactical line and an all-round elaboration of the Bolshevik tactical line became prerequisites for guiding the Russian revolution to victory. In July 1905, therefore, Lenin published his well-known

work, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. Here, he developed Marxism by comprehensively advancing the theory of proletarian leadership in the democratic revolution, the theory of the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class and the theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing into the socialist revolution.

#### SHOULD THE PROLETARIAT STRIVE FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION?

The Mensheviks held that a bourgeois revolution could benefit only the bourgeoisie and that only the bourgeoisie could lead it. They held that the proletariat could only play the role of subsidiary to the bourgeoisie and should not independently try to lead and develop the entire democratic movement, lest the bourgeoisie were frightened away.

Lenin criticized these absurdities of the Mensheviks. He pointed out that the Russian bourgeoisie was a class that existed in a feudal, militaristic and imperialist country and its very class position determined its inconsistency in the democratic revolution. The very position of the proletariat as a class, he said, compelled it to be consistently democratic, and only under the leadership of the proletariat could the bourgeois-democratic revolution be carried through to the end. He pointed out that the bourgeoisie did not want the bourgeois revolution to sweep away all remnants of the past too resolutely and that it would try hard to prevent the weapon which the bourgeois revolution would supply to the proletariat from being turned against it. The proletariat is more interested than the bourgeoisie in a decisive victory of the

democratic revolution. Therefore, the bourgeois revolution is, in a sense, more advantageous to the proletariat than to the bourgeoisie. Lenin said:

Marxism teaches the proletarian not to keep aloof from the bourgeois revolution, not to be indifferent to it, not to allow the leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie but, on the contrary, to take a most energetic part in it, to fight most resolutely for consistent proletarian democratism, for the revolution to be carried to its conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

Failure to do so would mean going over completely from the platform of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat "to a platform of chaffering with the bourgeoisie, buying the bourgeoisie's voluntary consent ("so that it should not recoil") at the price of our principles, by betraying the revolution".<sup>2</sup> Lenin said:

The outcome of the revolution depends on whether the working class will play the part of a subsidiary to the bourgeoisie, a subsidiary that is powerful in the force of its onslaught against the autocracy, but impotent politically, or whether it will play the part of leader of the people's revolution.<sup>3</sup>

To ensure that it will assume leadership in the revolution, the proletariat must make a reliable ally of the peasantry. Lenin pointed out that the peasantry could become an ally of the proletariat in the democratic revolution, and wholehearted and most radical adherents of this

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<sup>1</sup> "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 9, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



revolution, because only a thorough-going democratic revolution could satisfy their demand for land. He said:

The peasantry will inevitably become such if only the course of revolutionary events, which brings it enlightenment, is not prematurely cut short by the treachery of the bourgeoisie and the defeat of the proletariat.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, "it [the proletariat] can become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the peasant masses join its revolutionary struggle. If the proletariat is not strong enough for this the bourgeoisie will be at the head of the democratic revolution and will impart an inconsistent and self-seeking nature to it. Nothing but a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry can prevent this."<sup>2</sup> Lenin refuted the Menshevik view that the mobilization of the peasants would induce the bourgeois classes to desert the cause of the revolution and thus diminish its sweep. He said:

Those who really understand the role of the peasantry in a victorious Russian revolution would not dream of saying that the sweep of the revolution will be diminished if the bourgeoisie recoils from it. For, in actual fact, the Russian revolution will begin to assume its real sweep, and will really assume the widest revolutionary sweep possible in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution, only when the bourgeoisie recoils from it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

To establish a firm alliance with the peasants, the proletariat must put forward and carry out an agrarian programme for the complete elimination of the feudal system.

#### WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE BY THE PEOPLE?

The Mensheviks equivocated as to the forms of struggle in the revolution. They questioned the need or urgency for any armed uprising, and they suggested it would be better to try and convene some sort of representative institution, of the nature of a *Zemsky Sobor* or a State Duma. In opposition to their views, Lenin maintained that the most effective means of achieving victory in the democratic revolution was a people's armed uprising, that the democratic revolutionary movement had already placed armed uprising on the order of the day, and that the political party of the proletariat should take the most energetic steps to arm the proletariat and make sure that it could directly lead the uprising. Pointing to the necessity of organizing a revolutionary army, he said:

The revolutionary army is needed because great historical issues can be resolved only *by force*, and, in modern struggle, the *organisation of force* means military organisation.<sup>1</sup>

He issued the call to "form fighting squads *at once* everywhere, among the students, and *especially among the workers*, etc., etc. Let groups be at once organised of

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<sup>1</sup> "The Revolutionary Army and the Revolutionary Government", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 8, p. 563.

three, ten, thirty, etc., persons. Let them arm themselves at once as best they can, be it with a revolver, a knife, a rag soaked in kerosene for starting fires, etc."<sup>1</sup>

Guiding the masses towards an uprising, Lenin issued such revolutionary slogans as would set free their revolutionary initiative and disorganize the tsarist state apparatus. The slogans called for mass political strikes; for the immediate realization of the eight-hour working day in a revolutionary way; for the immediate organization of revolutionary peasant committees to carry out all democratic changes in a revolutionary way, including the confiscation of the landed estates, etc. The purport of these slogans, which ignored the authorities and existing law and disregarded the restrictions of the tsarist authorities and their laws, was to establish a new revolutionary order through unauthorized actions by the people.

While calling on the masses to rise in revolt Lenin repeatedly exhorted them to give up any illusion about constitutional government. In August 1905, under pressure of the revolution and in an attempt to blunt the revolutionary determination of the people, the tsarist government announced the convocation of the Bulygin Duma. Lenin pointed out that in the circumstances then prevailing, participation in the Bulygin Duma would amount to helping the tsarist government cheat the people and divert them from the path of revolutionary struggle. Under Lenin's leadership, the Bolsheviks worked out tactics for boycotting the Bulygin Duma. This proved to be the only correct tactics, and the birth of the Bulygin Duma was frustrated in the rising tide of revolution.

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<sup>1</sup> "To the Combat Committee of the St. Petersburg Committee", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 9, pp. 344-45.

Then in December of the same year, the Bolsheviks led the armed working masses in an uprising.

Lenin held that it was necessary to set up a provisional revolutionary government as the organ of a victorious popular insurrection. He pointed out that this government would have to be a government of the dictatorship of the workers and peasants, which would put into practice the revolutionary dictatorship of the workers and peasants. Its task, he said, would be to consolidate the gains of the revolution, to crush the resistance of the counter-revolutionaries, to fight the attempts of the bourgeoisie to hold the revolution back and to enforce the minimum programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Party.

On the question of participation in the provisional revolutionary government, the Menshevik view was that the Social-Democratic Party should in principle not take part in it but should surrender power to the bourgeoisie and let it be a bourgeois dictatorship. In opposition to this view, Lenin maintained that in principle the Social-Democratic Party could and should take part in the provisional revolutionary government at a time when the people's revolution was achieving victory. This government should put into effect the minimum programme of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, namely, the programme of the democratic revolution, and press ahead to create the conditions for the realization of socialism. While taking part in the provisional revolutionary government, the Social-Democratic Party must mercilessly crush all counter-revolutionary attempts and defend the independent interests of the working class. There were two main conditions for participation in such a government: one was that the Party must exercise strict control over its own representatives, and the other was that it

must never for an instant lose sight of the aim of socialist revolution.

### TO CONTINUE THE REVOLUTION OR TO STOP HALF-WAY?

Lenin estimated that in the conditions in Russia at the time, after the victory of the democratic revolution the bourgeoisie would desperately try to wrest from the proletariat the gains they had made in the period of the revolution, and that inevitably a life-and-death struggle for state power would ensue between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. He said:

Therefore, the proletariat, which is in the van of the struggle for democracy and heads that struggle, must not for a single moment forget the new antagonisms inherent in bourgeois democracy, or the new struggle.<sup>1</sup>

What lay ahead of the bourgeois-democratic revolution? In this connection, Lenin developed the Marxist theory of continuous revolution and the theory of peasant struggles as the great ally of the proletarian revolution, the theory which had been cast aside by the opportunists of the Second International. In unequivocal terms, he set forth the theory of the transition from the bourgeois-democratic to the socialist revolution. The opportunists of the Second International and their companions, the Russian Mensheviks, maintained that there would be a prolonged interval between the democratic and the socialist revolution — a period of bourgeois dictator-

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<sup>1</sup> "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 27.

ship. Lenin refuted this. He said that the democratic revolution could not affect the foundations of capitalism and that "a bourgeois revolution is a revolution which does not depart from the framework of the bourgeois, i.e., capitalist, socio-economic system".<sup>1</sup> And he added that the proletariat must "leave its proletarian, or rather proletarian-peasant, imprint" on the whole democratic revolution.<sup>2</sup> He declared:

. . . we shall bend every effort to help the entire peasantry achieve the democratic revolution, *in order thereby to make it easier* for us, the party of the proletariat, to pass on as quickly as possible to the new and higher task—the socialist revolution.<sup>3</sup>

Lenin compared the democratic revolution to the first step, and the socialist revolution to the second step, and he said:

. . . we must take this first step all the sooner, get it over all the sooner, win a republic, mercilessly crush the counter-revolution, and prepare the ground for the second step.<sup>4</sup>

In his article "Social-Democracy's Attitude Toward the Peasant Movement", Lenin said:

. . . from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organ-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> "Social-Democracy's Attitude Toward the Peasant Movement", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 9, p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

ised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way.<sup>1</sup>

## TWO APPRAISALS OF THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

The tide of revolution gradually ebbed in Russia after the failure of the December uprising. From then on there were fundamental differences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks over the appraisal of the Revolution of 1905, the lessons to be drawn from it, and other such issues.

Plekhanov, representative of the Mensheviks, complained that the political strike was "untimely", for it had led to the armed uprising, that the defeat of the uprising was "not unexpected" and that the workers "should not have taken to arms", etc. In reply to this argument Lenin declared:

On the contrary, we should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; we should have explained to the masses that it was impossible to confine things to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was necessary.<sup>2</sup>

Plekhanov had the effrontery to compare himself to Marx, saying that Marx also had put the brake on the Paris workers' uprising in 1870. Lenin pointed out that in September 1870, six months before the Paris Com-

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<sup>1</sup> "Social-Democracy's Attitude Toward the Peasant Movement", *op. cit.*, pp. 236-37.

<sup>2</sup> "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 11, p. 173.

mune, Marx had warned the French workers against a premature insurrection, but that above everything else Marx valued the historical initiative of the masses. Lenin said that "when the *masses* rose, Marx wanted to march with them, to learn with them in the process of the struggle, and not to give them bureaucratic admonitions".<sup>1</sup> Marx's attitude to the proletariat storming heaven was, he said, that of a practical adviser, a participant in the struggle of the masses. And after the defeat of the Paris Commune, Marx sang ardent praises to its achievements, saying:

Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class.<sup>2</sup>

But what had been Plekhanov's attitude? Before the December armed uprising of the Russian workers, Lenin recalled, Plekhanov had issued no warning to them whatsoever, but he tilted at the revolutionary masses when the uprising was defeated, saying that they "should not have taken to arms". How could an opportunist like Plekhanov compare himself to Marx, the revolutionary teacher of the proletariat? They were as different as night and day!

The Mensheviks joined the bourgeois liberals after the defeat of the Revolution of 1905 in wantonly flinging mud at it. Referring to this, Lenin said:

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<sup>1</sup> "Preface to the Russian Translation of Karl Marx's Letters to Dr. Kugelmann", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 12, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Marx and Engels, "Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association on the Civil War in France, 1871", *Selected Works*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, Vol. I, p. 542.



The question of evaluating our revolution is important not only theoretically by any means. It is important directly, practically, in the everyday sense. . . . We must proclaim openly, for all to hear, for the behoof of the wavering and feeble in spirit, to shame those who are turning renegade and deserting socialism, that the workers' party sees in the direct revolutionary struggle of the masses, in the October and December struggles of 1905, the greatest movements of the proletariat since the Commune; that only in the development of such forms of struggle lies the pledge of coming successes of the revolution; and that these examples of struggle must serve as a beacon for us in training up new generations of fighters.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin made a profound summing-up of the lessons of the Revolution of 1905; he showed that only a mass revolutionary struggle could bring about a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the people, that it was not enough to undermine or restrict the power of the tsar — it must be destroyed, that only the proletariat could lead the democratic revolution, and that this revolution could not be won unless the proletariat isolated the bourgeoisie and formed a solid alliance with the peasantry.

The Bolsheviks and the Russian proletariat gained a real political tempering in the Revolution of 1905; they gained a rich stock of experience in struggle, and Soviets of Workers' Deputies — the embryo of proletarian political power — were created by the revolutionary masses. Later, Lenin described the Revolution of 1905 as the dress rehearsal of the October Revolution of 1917. "Two

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<sup>1</sup> "The Assessment of the Russian Revolution", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 15, pp. 61, 62.

Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", which Lenin wrote during the Revolution of 1905, laid the foundations of Bolshevik tactics and armed the Party and the working class to continue their revolutionary struggle.

#### 4. THE STRUGGLE AT THE STUTTART CONGRESS

In the years after the Revolution of 1905 in Russia, the working-class movement surged forward in the capitalist countries, with frequent large-scale strikes taking place in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, the United States, Italy, Holland and Belgium, in the course of which the workers even came into armed conflict with the police and the troops. The national-liberation movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East was also growing. Wars of aggression broke out in this period one after another, international relations grew very much tenser and the munitions drive was intensified as never before. These were the circumstances in which the Second International held its Stuttgart Congress in August 1907. It was the first international conference Lenin ever attended at which he fought the opportunists of the Second International face to face.

THE GERMAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY USES  
ITS PRESTIGE TO MANIPULATE THE CONGRESS  
AND SPREAD ITS ERRONEOUS IDEAS

The opportunist position of the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party had a very bad influence on the congress. Germany was the land of Marx and Engels, and the German Party, the oldest and the biggest proletarian

party at that time, enjoyed high prestige in the Second International. Taking advantage of this the opportunist leaders of the German Party did their utmost to spread their erroneous ideas among the other Parties. Many leaders of these Parties blindly followed the opportunist line of the German Party. In "Our Revolution", Lenin later pointed out that one of the characteristics of these people was that they were "extraordinarily fainthearted" and "that when it comes to the minutest deviation from the German model . . . [they] fortify themselves with reservations".<sup>1</sup>

The German Party took certain organizational steps in order to manipulate the congress. At the very beginning of the congress, it had a special decision passed by the International Socialist Bureau whereby the plenary sessions were to be presided over by representatives of the German Party and the principal commissions of the congress were to be led by prominent members of the same Party. Thus the Anti-Militarism Commission, for example, was headed by Südekum, and Kautsky was secretary of the Commission on the Relations Between the Socialist Parties and the Trade Unions. The congress also specified a definite number of votes for each nation — twenty each for the big nations and two each for the small ones. Moreover, the German Party arranged for such extreme Right-wing opportunists as Bernstein, David, Legien, Scheidemann and Vollmar to be delegates, while it did its level best to prevent Left-wingers, and especially Rosa Luxemburg, from attending. However, Rosa Luxemburg finally attended the congress, but as a delegate of the Polish instead of the German Party.

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 724.

The composition of the Russian delegation was very mixed. It consisted, among others, of Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries and trade union representatives. There were both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks among the delegates of the Social-Democratic Party.

The Right-wingers and the centrists constituted the majority at the congress; the only forces Lenin and the Bolsheviks could rely on were the Polish Left-wing Social-Democrats headed by Rosa Luxemburg and Julian Marchlewski, and the German Left-wing Social-Democrats headed by Klara Zetkin.

The Stuttgart Congress was held at a time when the international revolutionaries were in the minority.

#### THE ADOPTION OF A CORRECT RESOLUTION ON ANTI-MILITARISM AS A RESULT OF STRUGGLE

Anti-militarism was the most important and the most heatedly debated question at the congress. Lenin himself was a member of the Anti-Militarism Commission.

Four draft resolutions were submitted to the congress for discussion, one by Bebel on behalf of the German Social-Democratic Party, and the others by Hervé, Guesde, Jaurès and Vaillant, representing the French Socialist Party. All of them had serious shortcomings and errors. Lenin made a special point of analysing Hervé's and Bebel's resolutions.

Hervé's draft resolution stated that the proletariat had no fatherland, that all wars were in the interests of the capitalists, and that the proletariat must oppose every war with strikes and uprisings. Lenin pointed out that Hervé was advocating a semi-anarchist view. First, he

did not understand "that war is a necessary product of capitalism, and that the proletariat cannot renounce participation in revolutionary wars";<sup>1</sup> second, he did not understand that whether or not a war should be opposed by strikes and uprisings "depends on the objective conditions of the particular crisis, economic or political, precipitated by the war, and not on any previous decision that revolutionaries may have made";<sup>2</sup> and third, he and his followers were "capable of letting anti-militarism make them forget socialism".<sup>3</sup> Lenin said that the struggle must consist not simply in replacing war by peace, but in replacing capitalism by socialism, and that the essential thing was not merely to prevent war but to utilize the crisis created by war in order to hasten the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

Contrary to Lenin's Marxist criticism, Vollmar and others spread opportunist views in criticizing Hervé's mistakes. They said that parliamentary struggle was the form of struggle against war and that, instead of opposing war by strikes, it was necessary to strengthen the pressure on the authorities and sway public opinion in order to stop armed conflict. Directing himself against such views, Lenin pointed out that all the theoretical truths which had been set forth in refuting Hervé "serve as an introduction not to a justification of parliamentary cretinism, not to the sanction of peaceful methods alone, not to the worship of the present relatively peaceful and quiet situation, but to the acceptance of all methods of

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<sup>1</sup> "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 13, pp. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup> "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 13, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

struggle, to the appraisal of the experience of the revolution in Russia".<sup>1</sup> He said that the opportunist criticism of Hervé's views made one recognize the living spark in Hervéism: the practical truth in it was that Hervé stood for mass revolutionary action. Although as a whole Hervé's views were "heroic folly", Lenin declared, the position of Vollmar and others was "opportunist cowardice".<sup>2</sup>

The draft resolution put forward by Bebel on behalf of the German Social-Democratic Party stated that militarism was the product of capitalism and that war could be eliminated only after the capitalist system had been wiped out. However, it substituted the conception of "defensive" and "offensive" wars for that of imperialist war, thus providing a loophole for the "defencists". As for the kind of action to be taken against war, this draft, like the resolutions passed at the previous congresses of the Second International, actually recognized parliamentary struggle as the only form of struggle.

Lenin had a meeting with Rosa Luxemburg, Klara Zetkin and others and, together with Rosa Luxemburg, formulated amendments to the draft resolution proposed by the German Party. These proposed the deletion of the passages on defensive war, and a principled revision of the last two paragraphs. The revised version of these two paragraphs read:

If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working classes and their parliamentary representatives in the countries involved, supported by the co-ordinating activity of the International Socialist

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> "Bellicose Militarism and the Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 15, p. 196.

Bureau, to exert every effort in order to prevent the outbreak of war by the means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the sharpening of the class struggle and the sharpening of the general political situation.

In case war should break out anyway, it is their duty to intervene in favour of its speedy termination and with all their powers to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war to arouse the people and thereby to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule.<sup>1</sup>

All this redrafting transformed Bebel's resolution into an altogether different resolution. Lenin said that this resolution "is rich in thought and precisely formulates the tasks of the proletariat. It combines the stringency of orthodox — i.e., the only scientific Marxist analysis with recommendations for the most resolute and revolutionary action by the workers' parties. This resolution cannot be interpreted *à la* Vollmar, nor can it be fitted into the narrow framework of naive Hervéism".<sup>2</sup> This resolution as redrafted by Lenin was adopted by the congress unanimously.

#### THE FIGHT AGAINST "SOCIALIST COLONIAL POLICY" AND THE THEORY OF TRADE UNION NEUTRALITY

The colonial question was another question which aroused heated debate.

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<sup>1</sup> "Manifesto of the International Socialist Congress at Basle", Appendices to Lenin's *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, p. 469.

<sup>2</sup> "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *op. cit.*, p. 81.



The draft resolution put forward by the opportunist Van Kol of Holland made no mention of the struggle of the proletarian political parties against the policy of colonialism and failed to urge the oppressed people in the colonies to arise and resist colonialism; instead it only enumerated "reforms" that could be carried out in the colonies under the capitalist system. Van Kol and his like held that socialists should suggest to their own governments that they sign international treaties specifying certain rights for the inhabitants of the colonies. The resolution even stated openly: "The Congress did not in principle condemn all colonial policy, for under socialism colonial policy could play a civilising role."<sup>1</sup> While it was under discussion in the commission this resolution was supported by most of the opportunists, but it met with the strong opposition of the Left-wingers. In the congress, the opportunists Bernstein and David, speaking for the majority of the German delegation, urged acceptance of the "socialist colonial policy" and tried to impose Van Kol's views on the congress. They fulminated against the Left-wingers for their failure to appreciate the importance of reforms and their lack of a practical colonial programme.

Lenin held that in reality Van Kol's proposition was tantamount to a direct retreat towards bourgeois policy and the bourgeois world outlook that justified colonial wars and colonial atrocities. He declared that the very concept "socialist colonial policy" was a hopeless muddle and the only correct stand for socialists to take was "down with all colonial policy, down with the whole

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Lenin in "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *op. cit.*, p. 75.

policy of intervention and capitalist struggle for the conquest of foreign lands and foreign populations, for new privileges, new markets, control of the Straits, etc."<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the sharp struggle, the revolutionaries represented by Lenin succeeded in rallying around themselves the delegates who came from small nations which either did not pursue a colonial policy or suffered from it. Thus they were able to win a majority vote and get a comparatively correct resolution passed at the congress.

The congress also discussed the question of the relations between the Party and the trade unions.

The opportunists were opposed to the idea of the Party assuming leadership of the trade unions. The draft resolution submitted to the congress by the majority group of the French Socialist Party stood for free co-operation between the Party and the trade unions on an independent basis. This resolution had the all-out support of the trade union representatives, who made up half the German delegation. Plekhanov upheld the proposition of trade union neutrality, saying that "introducing political differences into the trade unions in Russia would be harmful".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin thoroughly refuted the theory of trade union neutrality. He explained that the class interests of the bourgeoisie inevitably gave rise to the attempt to confine the trade unions to petty and narrow activity within the framework of the capitalist system and keep them away from any contact with socialism, and that the neutrality theory was the ideological cover for these efforts of the

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<sup>1</sup>"Events in the Balkans and in Persia", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 15, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Lenin in "Trade-Union Neutrality", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 13, p. 464.

bourgeoisie; it was a theory which served to strengthen the influence of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. Quoting irrefutable facts, Lenin showed the actual harmful results of the advocacy of neutrality which played into the hands of the opportunists in the German Social-Democratic Party and as a result of which the trade union leaders of Germany had so clearly deviated in the direction of opportunism. Led by Lenin, the Russian Bolshevik delegates, together with the revolutionaries of other Parties, waged a fight against the theory of trade union neutrality at the congress. And the resolution which the congress adopted rejected this theory in principle.

THE LEAST CREDITABLE FEATURES OF GERMAN  
SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY SHOULD NOT BE HELD UP  
AS A MODEL WORTHY OF IMITATION

On all these important questions the discussions at the Stuttgart Congress clearly demonstrated the antagonism between Marxism and opportunism, and between the proletarian and the bourgeois world outlook. Lenin wrote:

. . . the Stuttgart Congress brought into sharp contrast the opportunist and revolutionary wings of the international Social-Democratic movement on a number of cardinal issues and decided these issues in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism.<sup>1</sup>

The resolutions passed at the Stuttgart Congress were powerful weapons for the Left-wing Social-Democrats of various countries in their struggle against opportunism,

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<sup>1</sup> "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *op. cit.*, p. 81.

social chauvinism and "defencism". Although the Right-wingers and the "centrists" had been in the majority at the congress, Lenin upheld the Marxist truth and had finally defeated opportunism, as a result of his unity with the Left-wingers and the various other forms of work that he undertook.

After the congress, Lenin set out the attitude which should be taken towards the opportunist policy of the German Party. He explained that it was inadvisable "to represent the least creditable features of German Social-Democracy as a model worthy of imitation".<sup>1</sup> He said:

We must criticise the mistakes of the German leaders fearlessly and openly if we wish to be true to the spirit of Marx and help the Russian socialists to be equal to the present-day tasks of the workers' movement. . . . We should not conceal these mistakes, but should use them as an example to teach the Russian Social-Democrats how to avoid them and live up to the more rigorous requirements of revolutionary Marxism.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin held that the Stuttgart Congress confirmed the observation made by Engels in 1886 concerning the German labour movement: "In Germany everything becomes philistine in calm times; the sting of French competition is thus absolutely necessary. And it will not be lacking."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> "Preface to the Pamphlet by Voinov (A. V. Lunacharsky) on the Attitude of the Party Towards the Trade Unions", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 13, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *op. cit.*, p. 85.

## 5. THE THEORETICAL STRUGGLE AGAINST THE REVISIONISTS DURING THE EBB TIDE OF THE REVOLUTION

### THE REVISIONIST PHILOSOPHY OF "MUTINY ON ONE'S KNEES"

After the failure of the revolution of 1905-07, Russia went through the period of Stolypin reaction. In December 1907, Lenin again went abroad and lived in Geneva. Although the revolution had sustained a temporary setback, Lenin was full of confidence in the strength of the working class and believed that a new revolution was inevitable. As early as March 1906, he said, "The revolution lies buried. It is being eaten by worms. But revolution has the power of speedy resurrection and of blossoming forth again on well-prepared soil."<sup>1</sup> In the first article he wrote after arriving in Geneva, Lenin said:

We knew how to work during the long years preceding the revolution. Not for nothing do they say we are as hard as rock. The Social-Democrats have built a proletarian party which will not be disheartened by the failure of the first armed onslaught, will not lose its head, nor be carried away by adventures. That party is marching to socialism, without tying itself or

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<sup>1</sup>"The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 10, p. 219.

its future to the outcome of any particular period of bourgeois revolutions. That is precisely why it is also free of the weaker aspects of bourgeois revolution. And this proletarian party is marching to victory.<sup>1</sup>

While abroad Lenin published the periodical *Proletary* as a medium for rallying, uniting and educating the Bolshevik cadres, in preparation for the new revolutionary tide.

During this period, counter-revolution waged its offensive on the ideological front as well. A horde of fashionable writers appeared who attacked Marxism, mocked the revolution and extolled treachery. Some intellectual "fellow-travellers" were disheartened; they went downhill and then degenerated and, forming a broad united front with the international revisionists and the bourgeois philosophers, undertook a "campaign" against the theoretical foundations of Marxism, i.e., against dialectical and historical materialism.

In 1908, such Russian Social-Democrats as Bogdanov, Yushkevich and others published a series of books including *Studies in the Philosophy of Marxism*, *Materialism and Critical Realism*, *Dialectics in the Light of the Modern Theory of Knowledge* and *The Philosophical Constructions of Marxism*. They tried to use the empirio-criticism of Mach and Avenarius (that is, Machism) to "revise" Marxist philosophy; they regarded the most reactionary philosophical theories as fashionable, so that Kantianism, Humism and even Berkeleianism all became "recent" philosophy, replacing Marxist philosophy. They said that "belief" in the existence of the external world was mysticism, and that Engels' dialectics was also mysti-

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<sup>1</sup> "Political Notes", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 13, p. 446.

cism; they even declared that the proletariat needed its own "religion" and "deity". These people, who had in fact completely renounced dialectical materialism, employed endless subterfuges, not daring openly and plainly to oppose the views they had abandoned. Lenin said, "This is truly 'mutiny on one's knees'. . . . This is typical philosophical revisionism. . . ." <sup>1</sup> In his letters to Gorky and others, Lenin sharply described the philosophical works of the revisionists as "absurd, harmful, philistine, priestly, *all of it*, from beginning to end, from the branches to the root — to Mach and Avenarius" <sup>2</sup>

It became particularly urgent to expose the enemies of Marxism and destroy their philosophical absurdities. At the same time, the revolution had roused new strata to political activity; many new workers joined the Party and they could not possibly acquire a firm Marxist world outlook overnight. In the circumstances, theoretical struggle was put in the foreground. Lenin said:

It is not by mere chance that the period of social and political reaction, the period when the rich lessons of the revolution are being "digested", is also the period when the fundamental theoretical, including the philosophical, problems are of prime importance to any *living* trend. <sup>3</sup>

In the course of this struggle, Lenin undertook an immense amount of theoretical work and completed his

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<sup>1</sup> "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 14, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Letter to A. M. Gorky", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 34, p. 338.

<sup>3</sup> "Those Who Would Liquidate Us", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 17, p. 76.

well-known philosophical work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Here, using the dialectical- and historical-materialist approach, Lenin generalized revolutionary experience and all that was valuable and essential in the achievements of science in the whole historical period following the death of Engels, and demolished the various pseudo-Marxist, reactionary philosophical trends which were prevalent at the time.

#### FROM KANT TO HUME AND BERKELEY

Machism held that the world consists of "complexes of sensations" and that the existence of anything else other than sensations was beyond the knowledge of man. Lenin pointed out that the starting-point and the fundamental premise of this philosophy was subjective idealism, and that it led to the absurdity of solipsism, to admitting the existence of only the philosophizing individual. Criticizing Machist agnosticism, Lenin showed that things exist independently of our consciousness, independently of our perceptions, outside of us; that there definitely is not, nor can there be, any difference in principle between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself — there is only the difference between what is known and what is not yet known; and that knowledge emerges from ignorance and incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact. Knowledge was a process that was made up of many aspects and went through many stages, each particular stage being marked by relativity but also having the seeds of absolute truth. Lenin said:

Human thought then by its nature is capable of giving, and does give, absolute truth, which is com-



pounded of a sum-total of relative truths. Each step in the development of science adds new grains to the sum of absolute truth, but the limits of the truth of each scientific proposition are relative, now expanding, now shrinking with the growth of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Practice is the criterion of truth. Our perceptions and ideas, said Lenin, are the images of things, and practice is the test of these images and distinguishes a true from a false image. The placing of the criterion of practice at the basis of the theory of knowledge inevitably leads to materialism, sweeping aside the endless fabrications of professorial scholasticism.

Both Mach and Avenarius began their philosophical careers in the seventies of the previous century, when the fashionable cry in German professorial circles was "Back to Kant". And, indeed, both founders of empirio-criticism started from Kant in their philosophical "development". Mach said:

His [Kant's] critical idealism was, as I acknowledge with the deepest gratitude, the starting-point of all my critical thought. But I found it impossible to remain faithful to it. Very soon I began to return to the views of Berkeley . . . [and then] arrived at views akin to those of Hume. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The Machist disciples, Bogdanov and Co., were far less outspoken than their teacher. On the one hand they willfully departed from the philosophical basis of Marxism, while on the other, using ambiguous language they

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<sup>1</sup>"Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Lenin in "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", *op. cit.*, p. 194.

mixed up right and wrong. They alleged that they were "also" Marxists philosophically, that they "almost" saw eye to eye with Marx, and that they had only "supplemented" his teachings a little.

#### CAN NEW DISCOVERIES IN NATURAL SCIENCE NEGATE THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF MARXISM?

The Machists boasted that their philosophy was "the philosophy of twentieth-century natural science". But in fact their only connection with it was with one backward school of natural science. In the late 19th century and at the beginning of the present century, natural science, particularly physics, made a series of great achievements which shook certain outdated ideas of traditional physics. It was in these circumstances that some natural scientists who did not understand dialectics lapsed into idealism by way of relativism. Because of the discovery of electrons they said that "matter has disappeared", that there existed "motion without matter" and that scientific principles were just a number of "marks or signs", and so forth. These scientists had their counterparts in the Machists, who used these absurd arguments to negate philosophical materialism. Lenin pointed out that what had vanished was not matter itself but the limits within which we had hitherto known matter; that certain properties of matter which had seemed "absolute" to traditional physics were now revealed to be relative; that the fact that matter was an objective reality existing outside of the mind was absolute, and that electrons or any other new discoveries could not alter this fact. Lenin also said that the developments in mod-

ern physics would inevitably lead to the only true philosophy of natural science — dialectical materialism — not directly but by a zigzag route. He said:

Modern physics is in travail; it is giving birth to dialectical materialism. The process of child-birth is painful. And in addition to a living healthy being, there are bound to be produced certain dead products, refuse fit only for the garbage-heap. And the entire school of physical idealism, the entire empirio-critical philosophy, together with empirio-symbolism, empirio-monism, and so on, and so forth, must be regarded as such refuse!<sup>1</sup>

YOU CANNOT JUDGE A MAN, OR A PHILOSOPHICAL  
SCHOOL, BY THE OUTSIDE LABEL

Machism claimed to rise above materialism and idealism and to be a non-partisan philosophy. Lenin said:

A red thread that runs through *all* the writings of *all* the Machists is the stupid claim to have “risen above” materialism and idealism, to have transcended this “obsolete” antithesis; but *in fact* this whole fraternity is *continually* sliding into idealism and it conducts a steady and incessant struggle against materialism.<sup>2</sup>

He showed that the choice was either materialism, consistent to the end, or the falsehood and confusion of idealism — there was no third choice. The so-called non-partisanship in philosophy was nothing but a brazen attempt

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

to cloak a slavish adherence to idealism and fideism. Philosophy was a partisan science. The bourgeois professors of philosophy were the learned salesmen of the theologians. Class struggle and class ideology were concealed behind the abstract disquisitions of the Machist theory of knowledge, while the objective role of the Machists was to serve the forces of reaction. Lenin said:

Marx and Engels were partisans in philosophy from start to finish, they were able to detect the deviations from materialism and concessions to idealism and fideism in every one of the "recent" trends.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle between different parties in the field of philosophy "in the last analysis reflects the tendencies and ideology of the antagonistic classes in modern society".<sup>2</sup>

The revisionists of all types styled themselves Marxists. But Lenin pointed out that a man should be judged not by what he says or by how he views himself but by his actions. A philosopher should be judged not by the label he gives himself but by how in practice he solves basic theoretical problems, what kind of people he joins up with and what he has taught and is teaching his disciples and followers.

Using this criterion Lenin made the following general appraisal of empirio-criticism: 1) empirio-criticism is thoroughly reactionary in character on the whole problem of the theory of knowledge, using new artifices, terms and subtleties to disguise the old errors of idealism and agnosticism; 2) both Mach and Avenarius started out from Kant but they moved, not in the direction of materialism but in the opposite direction, towards Hume and

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

Berkeley. Their philosophy is simply one of the many schools of bourgeois philosophy, inheriting the line of subjective idealism and agnosticism; 3) this philosophy is related to one particular school of modern natural science, namely, reactionary physical idealism; 4) this philosophy is partisan, and its objective, class function is to serve the fideists faithfully in their struggle against dialectical and historical materialism.

#### THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN MARXISM AND REVISIONISM IS THE PRELUDE TO THE GREAT REVOLUTIONARY BATTLES OF THE PROLETARIAT

Lenin published his *Marxism and Revisionism* in April 1908, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Marx's death. In this well-known article, Lenin explained the social roots of revisionism, systematically revealed the content and essence of the revisionist trend and showed how important for the proletariat in its fight for emancipation was the struggle against revisionism.

Lenin showed that the revisionists were hostile to Marxism and that they had revised Marxist revolutionary theory all along the line in philosophy, political economy and the theory of the class struggle.

In the sphere of philosophy, the revisionists clung to the skirts of the bourgeois professors, mumbling that materialism had been refuted long ago and replacing "artful" (and revolutionary) dialectics by "simple" (and tranquil) evolution.

In the sphere of political economy, seizing on "new data on economic development" the revisionists attacked the Marxist theory of value, the theory of economic crisis under capitalism and the theory of the inevitable collapse

of capitalism, and spread the idea that there was a tendency for class antagonisms to become milder. Lenin resolutely refuted these absurdities, saying that the revisionists sinned by making generalizations based on facts selected one-sidedly, without reference to the system of capitalism as a whole. He said:

Only for a very short time could people, and then only the most short-sighted, think of refashioning the foundations of Marx's theory under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Realities very soon made it clear to the revisionists that crises were not a thing of the past: prosperity was followed by a crisis. The forms, the sequence, the picture of particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. While uniting production, the cartels and trusts at the same time, and in a way that was obvious to all, aggravated the anarchy of production, the insecurity of existence of the proletariat and the oppression of capital, thereby intensifying class antagonisms to an unprecedented degree. That capitalism is heading for a break-down . . . has been made particularly clear, and on a particularly large scale, precisely by the new giant trusts.<sup>1</sup>

In the sphere of politics, the revisionists tried to revise the very foundation of Marxism, namely, the theory of the class struggle. They asserted that since the "will of the majority" prevailed under democracy, one must not regard the state as an organ of class rule. Lenin averred that this was identical with the view of the bourgeois liberals. He said:

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<sup>1</sup> "Marxism and Revisionism", *Collected Works*, Moscow; Vol. 15, pp. 35-36.

The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the early twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of "democratic" capitalism. Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin characterized the substance of revisionist policy in the following words:

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. "The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing" — this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment — such is the policy of revisionism.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin placed a high value on the significance for the proletarian revolution of the theoretical struggle which the Marxists were waging against the revisionists. He said that what they experienced then in the struggle

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

against those who tried to "revise" the theories of Marx was bound to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale. He declared:

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the waverings and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.



## 6. THE STRUGGLES AGAINST THE LIQUIDATORS, THE OTZOVISTS AND TROTSKY

During the years of Stolypin reaction, the Russian reactionaries greatly extended their suppression of the revolutionary movement. At the same time they introduced changes in the countryside which facilitated the development of a kulak economy. The revolutionary movement was on the decline. Lenin pointed out that as the objective tasks of the Russian revolution had not been fulfilled and the deep-rooted causes which had given rise to the Revolution of 1905 remained, the masses would be impelled to renew their revolutionary struggles and therefore a new rise of the revolutionary tide was inevitable. He laid it down that the fundamental aims of the Bolsheviks were still the overthrow of tsardom, the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the transition to socialist revolution.

Lenin also pointed out that under intensified reactionary rule, it was impossible for a general political strike or an armed uprising to be staged immediately, and instead, roundabout methods had to be employed against tsardom. Defensive tactics — an improved combination of underground work and legal work — should be adopted to build up strength and prepare the way for replacing defensive by offensive tactics once the revolutionary tide rose. He said that the Party must “concentrate all our efforts on a systematic, undeviating, comprehensive and

persistent utilisation of each and every legal possibility in order to gather the forces of the proletariat, to help it to group and consolidate itself, to help it to train itself for the struggle and stretch its limbs; and also steadily to restore the illegal Party units, to learn how to adapt them to new conditions, to restore the illegal purely Party organisations, and, first and foremost, the purely proletarian organisations, which alone are capable of directing all the work in the legal organisations, to imbue this work with the revolutionary Social-Democratic spirit".<sup>1</sup> In order to make an orderly retreat and once more accumulate revolutionary strength so as to be prepared for the new rise in the tide of revolution, the Party had to fight on the one hand the liquidators who made a fetish of bourgeois legality and wanted to abolish the Party, and on the other the Otzovists who refused to make use of legal opportunities.

#### LIQUIDATORS MAKE A FETISH OF BOURGEOIS LEGALITY

Frightened by counter-revolutionary violence, the Mensheviks refused to believe that a new rise in the tide of the revolution was possible. Many of them became liquidators, advancing the slogan of organizing an "open working-class party" or of "a struggle for an open party". They attempted to liquidate the organization of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and in its place to substitute an amorphous association which, they contended, must at all costs work within the limits of

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<sup>1</sup> "Notes of a Publicist", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 16, p. 259.

legality, even if that legality had to be attained at the cost of open renunciation of the programme, tactics and traditions of the Party. Pointing out that liquidationism was ideologically connected with opportunism, but was something more than opportunism, Lenin said:

The opportunists are leading the Party on to a wrong, bourgeois path, the path of a liberal-labour policy, but they *do not renounce* the Party itself, they do not liquidate it. Liquidationism is *that brand* of opportunism which goes to the length of *renouncing* the Party.<sup>1</sup>

To carry out their capitulationist line, the liquidators conducted splitting actions against the Party. They renounced the Party, left its ranks and fought it in the columns of the legal press, in the legal workers' organizations, in the trade unions, co-operative societies and at mass gatherings. In his article "Controversial Issues", Lenin said that the liquidators' "slogan of an open working-class party is, in its class origin, a slogan of the counter-revolutionary liberals. It contains nothing save reformism".<sup>2</sup> He said:

Liquidationism means not only the liquidation (i.e., the dissolution, the destruction) of the old party of the working class, it also means the destruction of the *class independence* of the proletariat, the corruption of its class-consciousness by *bourgeois* ideas.<sup>3</sup>

Lenin pointed out that under the conditions prevalent in Russia at the time, it was inevitable for the opportunists to become liquidators. He wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> "Controversial Issues", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 19, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

... in a period of bourgeois revolution, the opportunist wing of the workers' party, at times of crisis, disintegration and collapse, is bound to be either out-and-out liquidationist or liquidator-ridden. In a period of bourgeois revolution the proletarian party *is bound* to have a following of petty-bourgeois *fellow-travellers* ... who are least capable of digesting proletarian theory and tactics, least capable of holding their own in time of collapse, most likely to carry opportunism to its extreme.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin drew a clear line of demarcation between the Bolsheviks and the liquidators on the question of the limits of legal activity. He said:

... we want to strengthen the Social-Democratic Party, utilising all legal possibilities and all opportunities of open action; the liquidators want to squeeze the Party into the framework of a legal and open (under Stolypin) existence. We are fighting for the revolutionary overthrow of the Stolypin autocracy, utilising *for this struggle* every case of open action, widening the proletarian basis of the movement for this purpose. The liquidators are fighting for the open existence of the labour movement ... under Stolypin.<sup>2</sup>

To preserve the purity and unity of the political party of the proletariat, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party adopted a resolution at its Prague Conference in January 1912, expelling the Mensheviks and liquidators.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Liquidation of Liquidationism", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 15, p. 455.

<sup>2</sup> "Some Sources of the Present Ideological Discord", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 16, pp. 91-92.

"LIQUIDATIONISM ON THE LEFT" AND TROTSKY,  
WHO VEERED WITH THE WIND

While fighting the liquidators, Lenin also opposed the "Left" windbags, the Otzovists represented by Bogdanov and others, who were petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers in the Bolshevik Party.

The Third Duma, held in November 1907, was an out-and-out reactionary Duma of the Black Hundreds and the Constitutional-Democrats. The Otzovists demanded the recall of the Social-Democratic deputies from the Duma. They refused to work in the trade unions and other legally existing organizations and insisted on illegality at any price, maintaining that there were no legal avenues for Party work.

Lenin indicated that the objective conditions for boycotting the Duma did not exist as the revolutionary tide was at a low ebb. He contended that the Social-Democratic Party should participate in the Third Duma and use the rostrum it afforded to struggle against the tsarist government and the Constitutional-Democrats and conduct propaganda for socialism. To use the rostrum of parliament for preparing revolution was a necessary tactic in the specific historical circumstances. While attending the Duma, the Social-Democratic Party was "not to do deals or haggle with the powers that be, not to engage in the hopeless patching-up of the regime of the feudal-bourgeois dictatorship of counter-revolution, but to develop in every way the class consciousness, the socialist clarity of thought, the revolutionary determination and all-round organisation of the mass of the

workers".<sup>1</sup> Every activity of the Social-Democratic fraction in the Duma "must serve this fundamental aim".<sup>2</sup> By refusing to utilize legal opportunities for revolutionary activities, the Otzovists were separating the Party from the working class, were secluding themselves in underground organization and denying the Party the opportunity to use legal cover. In fact, the Otzovists renounced Party leadership of the broad non-Party masses and hampered the gathering of strength for a new advance of the revolution. Lenin called the Otzovist trend "liquidationism on the left" and maintained that it was just as necessary to struggle against this as against the liquidationism on the right. Finally, in June 1909, the Otzovists were expelled from the Bolshevik Party.

Later, when discussing the struggle against the Otzovists, Lenin wrote:

Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties, the Bolsheviks effected the most orderly retreat, with the least loss to their "army," with its core best preserved, with the least (in respect to profundity and irremediability) splits, with the least demoralization, and in the best condition to resume the work on the broadest scale and in the most correct and energetic manner. The Bolsheviks achieved this only because they ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrasemongers, who refused to understand that one had to retreat, that one had to know how to retreat, and that one had absolutely to learn how to

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<sup>1</sup> "Conference of the Extended Editorial Board of *Proletary*", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 15, pp. 439-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.

work legally in the most reactionary parliaments, in the most reactionary trade unions, co-operative societies, insurance societies and similar organizations.<sup>1</sup>

At that time Trotsky adopted a completely liquidationist stand. He declared:

The pre-revolutionary Social-Democratic Party in our country was a *workers'* party only in ideas and aims. Actually, it was an organisation of the Marxist intelligentsia, which led the awakening working class.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin commented, in "Disruption of Unity Under Cover of Outcries for Unity", "This is the old liberal and Liquidationist tune, which is really the prelude to the *repudiation* of the Party."<sup>3</sup> In 1912 Trotsky organized the August Bloc, assembling the liquidators, the Otzovists and other anti-Bolshevik groups and trends to oppose Lenin. However, he pretended to be "non-factional", saying that "all trends employ the same methods of struggle and organisation".<sup>4</sup> He maligned Lenin saying, "The outcries about the liberal danger in our working-class movement are simply a crude and sectarian travesty of reality."<sup>5</sup> Trotsky's hypocritical and high-sounding outbursts simply served as a blatant apology for liquidationism. Lenin exposed Trotsky's inglorious past, which was characterized by inconsistency and vacillation. At one time Trotsky had been an ardent Menshevik, at another

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<sup>1</sup> "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "Disruption of Unity Under Cover of Outcries for Unity", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 20, p. 343.

<sup>3</sup> "Disruption of Unity Under Cover of Outcries for Unity", *ibid.*

<sup>4,5</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "Disruption of Unity Under Cover of Outcries for Unity", *ibid.*, p. 344.

he proclaimed the absurdly "Left" theory of "permanent revolution". A short while earlier he had collaborated with the "Economists", and now he had joined with the liquidators. He declared himself to be above factions for the simple reason that he used to "borrow" his ideas from one group one day and from another the next day.<sup>1</sup> In fact, he was "a representative of the 'worst remnants of factionalism'".<sup>2</sup>

#### UNITY WITH THE LIQUIDATORS IS IMPOSSIBLE

The Second International had always supported the opportunists in the Russian Social-Democratic Party. Therefore in order to fight the liquidators in the Party, Lenin had to struggle against the Second International which supported liquidationism.

In December 1913 the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau again discussed the question of unity in the Russian Party. Two plans were put forward at the meeting. One was submitted by Rosa Luxemburg; she took a conciliatory stand and made an unprincipled demand for the restoration of so-called Party unity. Lenin criticized her mistake. The other plan was put forward by Kautsky; his proposal was "to arrange a general exchange of opinion". The International Bureau adopted a resolution along the lines proposed by Kautsky. Lenin said that the resolution was acceptable, but pointed out that Kautsky erred in stating at the meeting that the Russian Party "had disappeared". He

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<sup>1</sup> "Disruption of Unity Under Cover of Outcries for Unity", *ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.



said that "a distinction must be drawn between Kautsky's resolution, which was adopted by the Bureau, and the *speech* he made";<sup>1</sup> he called it "a good resolution and a bad speech".

A conference to restore the "unity" of the Russian Party was convened in Brussels in July 1914, under the auspices of the International Bureau. Besides the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks and the liquidators, there were other groups and trends. The conference was originally arranged for the exchange of opinion, but under Kautsky's manipulation, it passed a resolution for restoring "unity". The Bolsheviks refused to vote on the resolution. Lenin held that there was not the least possibility of compromising with the liquidators. Long before the conference he had written:

The Party cannot exist unless it defends its existence, unless it unreservedly fights those who want to liquidate it, destroy it, who do not recognise it, who renounce it.<sup>2</sup>

He had demanded as a condition for real Party unity "a complete rupture with liquidationism and the utter rout of this bourgeois deviation from socialism".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "A Good Resolution and a Bad Speech", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 19, p. 529.

<sup>2</sup> "Controversial Issues", *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> "The Sixth (Prague) All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 17, p. 460.





## 7. THE COPENHAGEN AND BASLE CONGRESSES

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REFORMISM ON THE QUESTION OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

In August 1910 the Second International held a congress at Copenhagen, and Lenin attended it. He rallied the Left-wingers who tried to get the congress to adopt some resolutions basically favourable to the international working-class movement.

Lenin was on the commission dealing with the question of co-operative societies; here, too, he fought against opportunism. At that time, co-operative societies had been organized extensively in the capitalist countries and most workers joined them. The opportunist view was prevalent that under the capitalist system it was possible to move towards socialism via the co-operative societies. The discussion on co-operatives, therefore, was very important.

Prior to the congress, three draft resolutions on co-operative societies were published, one by the Belgian Party, one by Jules Guesde representing the minority in the French Socialist Party and the other by Jean Jaurès representing the majority of the French Socialists.

Lenin analysed the three draft resolutions, and pointed out:

... there are two main lines of policy here: one — the line of proletarian class struggle, recognition of the value of the co-operative societies as a weapon in this struggle, as one of its subsidiary means, and a definition of the conditions under which the co-operative societies would really play such a part and not remain simple commercial enterprises. The other line is a petty-bourgeois one, obscuring the question of the role of the co-operative societies in the class struggle of the proletariat, attaching to the co-operative societies an importance transcending this struggle (i.e., confusing the proletarian and the proprietors' view of co-operative societies), defining the aims of the co-operative societies with general phrases that are acceptable even to the bourgeois reformers, those ideologues of the progressive employers, large and small.<sup>1</sup>

Jaurès was the representative of the other line, the one opposed to the line of the proletariat. Lenin fought firmly against Jaurès' views and put forward his own draft resolution; later he offered amendments to the resolution drafted by the sub-commission; however, both were rejected. To avoid a dispute over minor questions, Lenin, at the plenary session of the congress, voted for the resolution drafted by the sub-commission. By sheer insistence on the part of the revolutionaries, the following sentences were included in the resolution:

... although the co-operative movement can never in itself bring about the liberation of the workers, it can be an effective weapon in the class struggle led by

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<sup>1</sup> "The Question of Co-operative Societies at the International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 16, p. 276.

the workers for achieving their immediate aim — the conquest of political and economic power for the purpose of socializing all the means of production and of exchange. . . .

The congress adopted this resolution unanimously.

The Copenhagen Congress also adopted a resolution against militarism and war, in view of the ever-growing armaments drive of the Great Powers and the increasing war danger in the three years following the Stuttgart Congress. It contained the basic points in the Stuttgart resolution on the question of militarism, particularly the part which had been revised by Lenin. The Copenhagen resolution also declared that wars "will stop completely only when the capitalist economic system is eliminated", and that "the organized socialist proletariat of all countries is, therefore, the only reliable guarantor for the peace of the world". The opportunists publicly voted for this resolution; in fact, however, they were already sliding down the road of plain chauvinism.

#### ON THE QUESTION OF WAR THE OPPORTUNISTS SHOW THEMSELVES AS RENEGADES

The international situation grew more critical in the period after the Copenhagen Congress. In 1911 France and Germany narrowly escaped going to war over the seizure of Morocco. A war between Italy and Turkey took place in the same year. The year 1912 saw the beginning of the Balkan wars. These events indicated that war on a larger scale was in the making.

The situation demanded of Socialists in every country that they should express a clear attitude to the war

policy of imperialism. The opportunists began to reveal themselves in their true colours on this important question. They supported the intensified armaments drive and war preparations of their own bourgeois governments, and they spread chauvinistic and reformist ideas among the masses.

The British Social-Democrats actually adopted a resolution at their conference endorsing the British government's expansion of its naval forces. Bissolati and other reformists in the Italian Socialist Party openly supported their bourgeois government's war against Turkey. Erismann and other opportunists among the Swiss Social-Democrats voted in favour of their government's prohibition of strike picketing. The Baden parliamentary group of the German Social-Democrats voted for the war budget of their bourgeois government. The German trade union leader Karl Legien visited the United States and expressed hearty admiration for American bourgeois democracy, noting that every congressman was supplied with not only a private office furnished according to the last word in comfort but also a paid secretary. He also made a "speech of greetings" to the U.S. Congress, currying favour with the bourgeoisie.

Lenin sharply criticized these opportunists for their open betrayal of the working class. He declared that by following in the wake of the war policy of the bourgeois government and advocating expansion of the naval forces which were used for subjugating the colonial peoples, the British social-democratic leaders had proved that they had gone over to chauvinism. Lenin fully agreed with the Italian Socialist Party's expulsion of Bissolati and others, maintaining that it was completely correct. As for Erismann and his like, Lenin wrote that those

people "are by no means common deserters to the enemy camp; they are simply peaceful petty bourgeois, opportunists who are accustomed to parliamentary 'vermicelli' and who have succumbed to constitutional democratic illusions. The moment the class struggle took a sharp turn . . . our philistines . . . lost their heads and slid into the marsh".<sup>1</sup> In his article "What Should Not Be Imitated in the German Labour Movement", Lenin said that Legien's actions revealed "the American bourgeois fashion of 'killing' unstable Socialists 'with kindness,' as well as the German opportunist fashion of renouncing socialism to please the 'kind,' affable and democratic bourgeoisie".<sup>2</sup> He added:

We must not gloss over or confuse by "official optimistic" phrases the undoubted *disease* of the German Party which is manifesting itself in phenomena of this kind, we must expose it before the Russian workers, so that we may learn, by the experience of an older movement, what should not be imitated.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE BASLE MANIFESTO—A FAMOUS DOCUMENT AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR

Anti-war sentiment among the labouring masses surged to new heights after the outbreak of the Balkan War of 1912. In many European countries, there were mass rallies and demonstrations against the Balkan War and

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<sup>1</sup> "In Switzerland", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 18, pp. 308-09.

<sup>2</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 4, p. 335.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.



the imminent threat of world war. In this situation, the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau convened an extraordinary congress in Basle in November 1912. This important conference of the Second International lasted two days and was attended by delegates from all the European socialist parties. The only questions discussed at this congress were those related to the fight against the threat of war. Almost without dispute, the congress unanimously adopted a manifesto, the famous Basle Manifesto.

The manifesto reiterated the basic principles which had been set out in resolutions adopted at the Stuttgart and Copenhagen Congresses. It called on the people of all countries to oppose wars of aggression by every means and, in case war did break out, to utilize it to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule. The manifesto also pointed out that the war which was brewing was of a predatory, imperialist, reactionary and slave-driving character, that it would create an economic and political crisis and that the workers should regard participation in such a war as a crime, a criminal "shooting at each other for the profits of the capitalists, the ambitious dynasties". The manifesto served a warning on the bourgeois governments of the different countries in the following terms:

Let the governments remember that with the present condition of Europe and the mood of the working class, they cannot unleash a war without danger to themselves. Let them remember that the Franco-German War was followed by the revolutionary outbreak of the Commune, that the Russo-Japanese War

set into motion the revolutionary energies of the peoples of the Russian Empire. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Lenin made a high appraisal of the Basle Manifesto, saying:

Summing up, as it does, the enormous propagandist and agitational literature of all the countries against war, this resolution is the most exact and complete, the most solemn and formal exposition of socialist views on war and on tactics in relation to war.<sup>2</sup>

He added, "There is less idle declamation and more definite content in the Basle resolution than in other resolutions".<sup>3</sup>

The opportunists, mainly restrained by the increasing mass sentiment against imperialist war, did not openly oppose the manifesto at the congress.

After the Basle Congress and under the pressure of intensified workers' struggles against imperialist war, the congresses of the socialist parties of Britain, France, Germany and other countries adopted resolutions against the threat of war or expressed opposition to the armaments drive. When a clash occurred between Austria and Serbia in June-July 1914, demonstrations and mass rallies protesting against imperialist war were held in Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Austria-Hungary.

However, the majority of the leaders of the various socialist parties either merely talked about peace or ac-

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<sup>1</sup> Documents in Lenin's *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, p. 471.

<sup>2</sup> "The Collapse of the Second International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, pp. 168-69.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

tually used their own pacifist programmes to restrain the opposition to imperialist war. The leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party tried to create the impression that the reactionary German government was actively working for peace. The organ of the German Party went so far as to eulogize the German Kaiser as a faithful promoter of peace among mankind. Moreover, they secretly collaborated with their government and pledged their support in the event of war. They attempted to shift the entire responsibility for the July 1914 clash between Austria and Serbia onto Russia. The French Socialist Party leaders and most of the leaders of the other socialist parties, including the Russian Mensheviks, took up a stand of opposition to Germany in corresponding support of their own governments. Thus, the majority of the leaders of the socialist parties of the Second International actually betrayed the basic principles of the Basle Manifesto, assisted the instigators of imperialist war and enabled the imperialists to go ahead even more brazenly in unleashing the war.





## 8. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL-CHAUVINISM

THE SOCIAL-CHAUVINISTS HELP REACTION TO SEND  
THE WORKERS TO SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER

The world war which had been brewing eventually erupted in late July 1914. It was a war between two imperialist robber gangs—the Alliance and the Entente—for the redivision of the world and the seizure of spheres of influence.

The war was the general explosion of imperialist antagonisms and, in turn, sharpened these antagonisms still further. At the same time, it uncovered the opportunist abscess of the Second International; it ripped away the masks of the renegades concealed within the international working-class movement. From the very outbreak of the war, the leading cliques of opportunists in the socialist parties of the belligerent countries betrayed the Stuttgart and Copenhagen resolutions and the Basle Manifesto, and blatantly threw themselves into the arms of the bourgeoisie. Under cover of the slogan of the “defence of the fatherland”, they fanatically supported their own governments in waging the imperialist war.

In Germany, the Social-Democratic Party's statement raised the bogey of “Russian invasion” and declared that “in the hour of danger we shall not desert the fatherland”. The Right-wing leader of the German Party, Philip Scheidemann, said:

We have the task of protecting the country of the most developed Social-Democracy against servitude to Russia. . . . We Social-Democrats have not ceased to be Germans because we have joined the Socialist International.

The German General Trade Unions Council declared "civil peace", calling on the workers to support the government in the war. Hugo Haase, leader of the parliamentary group of the German Party, said that to Germany the war was defensive and therefore every German should defend his fatherland, and that in this war Germany would "fight for freedom" for the Russian people. The German Social-Democratic Party not only voted for war credits in parliament, but sent emissaries to the front to rouse the soldiers' morale.

Similarly in Austria, the Social-Democrats issued a statement fully supporting the government, and calling on the people to wage a "war of emancipation" "against tsarist Russia and the semi-barbarous Serbia".

In France, the Socialist Party declared it imperative to defend France and resist German aggression. It also conducted propaganda everywhere that France was fighting a defensive and just war. The parliamentary fraction of the French Party voted for the government's war budget. Two socialist deputies, Jules Guesde and Sembat, joined the imperialist French government so as to guarantee "co-operation" between labour and capital during the war.

The Right-wing of the British Socialist Party, the Russian Mensheviks and the leaders of the Belgian Socialist Party (including Vandervelde, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bu-

reau) all supported the war which their governments were waging against Germany.

Some of the Social-Democrats not only disseminated chauvinism in their own countries, but travelled abroad for this purpose. German Socialists — Scheidemann, Legien and others — were entrusted by their government to solicit Socialist and public support for Germany in Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark and other neutral countries. At the same time, British and French Socialists went to Russia on missions to persuade the Russian workers to fight for the defence of tsardom and its allies.

As the majority of the leaders of the Second International had openly betrayed socialism and degenerated into social-chauvinists, the International became completely discredited. The German Social-Democratic Party was the arch-criminal in splitting the international working-class movement and causing the collapse of the Second International. Lenin said:

The responsibility for disgracing socialism in this way rests, in the first place, on the German Social-Democrats who comprised the strongest and most influential party in the Second International.<sup>1</sup>

#### UPHOLDING THE BASLE MANIFESTO AND EXPOSING THE REACTIONARY SLOGAN OF "DEFENCE OF THE FATHERLAND"

At this critical moment of history, at a time when the socialist parties of the various countries were in a state of abysmal crisis and when leader after leader of the

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<sup>1</sup> "The War and Russian Social-Democracy", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, pp. 125-26.



working-class movement turned renegade, Lenin and the Bolsheviks under his leadership unhesitatingly held aloft the banner of opposition to the imperialist war, adhered to the principles of proletarian internationalism, rallied the revolutionary Socialists and led the toiling masses firmly along the revolutionary road of Marxism.

After the outbreak of the war, Lenin moved from Austria to neutral Switzerland in order to carry on his revolutionary activity more easily. As soon as he arrived in Berne, Lenin drafted his theses on the war — “The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War”. In these theses, he answered the most urgent basic questions of the time and showed the revolutionary masses of the world the road of struggle. After obtaining the concurrence of the Party organization in Russia, Lenin revised and published these theses in the form of a political manifesto of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, under the title “The War and Russian Social-Democracy”. This manifesto served as a programmatic document for the entire war period; it thoroughly exposed the imperialist character of the war, sharply denounced the betrayal of the leaders of the socialist parties of the chief European countries, and laid down the only correct line of struggle for the revolutionary Social-Democratic Parties. The manifesto said:

To seize land and to conquer foreign nations, to ruin a competing nation and to pillage her wealth, to divert the attention of the toiling masses from the internal political crises of Russia, Germany, England and other countries, to disunite the workers and fool them with nationalism, to exterminate their vanguard in order to

weaken the revolutionary movement of the proletariat — such is the only real content, the significance and the meaning of the present war.<sup>1</sup>

The manifesto issued a call for efforts to bring about the defeat of the tsarist government in the war, and declared:

Transform the present imperialist war into civil war — is the only correct proletarian slogan; it was indicated by the experience of the Commune, was outlined by the Basle resolution (1912) and logically follows from all the conditions of an imperialist war among highly developed bourgeois countries.<sup>2</sup>

Socialists of Britain, France, Belgium and other Entente countries held a conference in London in February 1915, and in April of the same year, Socialists of Germany and Austria of the Allied countries held a conference in Vienna. While making tongue-in-cheek appeals to all the governments to establish peace, the Socialists on both sides helped their respective bourgeois governments to allay the anxieties of the masses and they defended their chauvinistic stand. The Russian Bolsheviks sent Litvinov to the London Conference, and he read out the manifesto "The War and Russian Social-Democracy". The chairman of the conference infamously interrupted Litvinov again and again while he spoke, and Litvinov left the conference. Writing about the London Conference Lenin said:

The task of the opponents of social-chauvinism at the London Conference was therefore clear: to leave

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

the conference in the name of decisive anti-chauvinist principles, at the same time *not falling into* Germanophilism, since the pro-Germans are decidedly opposed to the London Conference for no other reason than chauvinism!<sup>1</sup>

Lenin denounced the betrayal of the Basle Manifesto by the opportunists of the Second International, saying:

. . . neither the avowed opportunists nor the Kautskyites dare repudiate the Basle Manifesto or compare its demands with the conduct of the socialist parties during the war.<sup>2</sup>

He added:

It is downright hypocrisy to ignore the Basle Manifesto altogether, or in its most essential parts, and to quote instead the speeches of leaders, or the resolutions of various parties, which, in the first place, *antecedate* the Basle Congress, secondly, were not the decisions adopted by the parties of the whole world, and thirdly, applied to various *possible* wars, but never to the present war.<sup>3</sup>

In the same article Lenin also said:

There is not a single word in the Basle Manifesto about the defence of the fatherland, or about the difference between a war of aggression and a war of defence. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> "The London Conference", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, pp. 157-58.

<sup>2</sup> "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 22, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

. . . the Manifesto very clearly recognises the predatory, imperialist, reactionary, slave-driving character of the present war, i.e., a character which makes the idea of defending the fatherland theoretical nonsense and a practical absurdity.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin pointed out that Marxism was not opposed to the "defence of the fatherland" slogan in general. It recognized under certain conditions the legitimacy, progressivism and justice of "defending the fatherland" or of a "defensive" war. He said:

. . . if Morocco were to declare war against France to-morrow, or India against England . . . etc., those wars would be "just," "defensive" wars, no matter which one was the first to attack. Every Socialist would then wish the victory of the oppressed, dependent, non-sovereign states against the oppressing, slave-holding, pillaging "great" nations.<sup>2</sup>

However, the social-chauvinists' plea of "defence of the fatherland" was put forward not to oppose foreign oppression but to safeguard the right of the "great" nations to plunder the colonies or to oppress other nations.

#### SOCIAL-CHAUVINISM IS A RIPE "BOURGEOIS ABSCESS INSIDE THE SOCIALIST PARTIES"

Lenin made a pointed analysis of social-chauvinism in his "The Collapse of the Second International", "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International" and

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-09.

<sup>2</sup> "Socialism and War", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, p. 220.

other works, showing how opportunism gradually developed inside the Social-Democratic Parties and, within several decades, ripened into social-chauvinism.

He wrote:

By social-chauvinism we mean the recognition of the idea of the defence of the fatherland in the present imperialist war, the justification of an alliance between the Socialists and the bourgeoisie and governments of "their own" countries in this war, the refusal to preach and support proletarian-revolutionary action against "one's own" bourgeoisie, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin pointed out that social-chauvinism was the concrete manifestation of opportunism in the imperialist war. The political and ideological content of the two was the same: class collaboration in place of class struggle. In Lenin's words:

The war drives this idea to its logical conclusion, adds to its ordinary factors and stimuli a whole series of extraordinary ones and by special threats and violence compels the unenlightened, disunited masses to co-operate with the bourgeoisie. This naturally widens the circle of adherents of opportunism and it explains sufficiently why the quondam radicals desert to this camp.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin indicated:

The economic basis of opportunism and social-chauvinism is the same: the interests of an insignif-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Collapse of the Second International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

icant layer of privileged workers and petty bourgeoisie who are defending their privileged positions, their "right" to the crumbs of profits which "their" national bourgeoisie receives from robbing other nations, from the advantages of its position as a great nation.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin, therefore, concluded: "Social-chauvinism is opportunism ripened to such a degree that the existence of this bourgeois abscess inside the Socialist Parties as it has existed *hitherto* has become impossible."<sup>2</sup> He further stated:

Social-chauvinism is a direct continuation of and a logical conclusion from Millerandism, Bernsteinism, the English liberal Labour Party; it is their sum total, their consummation, their highest achievement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Socialism and War", *op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.

<sup>2</sup> "The Collapse of the Second International", *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International", *op. cit.*, p. 389.

## 9. EXPOSING AND REFUTING KAUTSKYISM

Among the opportunists of the Second International, there were — besides the social-chauvinists who openly went over to the bourgeoisie — the so-called “centrists”, the undercover social-chauvinists. The chief representative of the “centrists” was Kautsky who since August 1914 “has presented a picture of utter bankruptcy as a Marxist, of unheard-of spinelessness, and a series of the most wretched vacillations and betrayals”.<sup>1</sup> However, he had high prestige in the Second International and his hypocrisy served him as camouflage. Therefore, the fight against Kautsky was no minor question but a basic one which affected the entire situation at the time. In order to rally the revolutionary Socialists and the broad masses of the various countries under the banner of Marxism and to oppose imperialist war by revolutionary war, Lenin spent a great deal of energy during the war period on exposing and refuting Kautsky. In a letter of October 1914, he wrote:

There is now *nothing* in the world that is more harmful and dangerous to the *ideological* independence of the proletariat than this vile self-satisfaction and loathsome hypocrisy of Kautsky, who wants to conceal and slur over everything and calm the awakened conscience

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<sup>1</sup> “The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution”, *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 47.

of the workers with sophisms and pseudo-scientific verbiage.<sup>1</sup>

In refuting Kautskyism, Lenin penetratingly explained and developed the Marxist theory of war and peace and tactics of proletarian revolutionary struggle.

THE PHILISTINE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THAT WAR  
IS A "CONTINUATION OF POLITICS"

In his "Socialism and War" Lenin wrote:

The Socialists have always condemned wars between peoples as barbarous and bestial. Our attitude towards war, however, differs in principle from that of the bourgeois pacifists and Anarchists. We differ from the first in that we understand the inseparable connection between wars on the one hand and class struggles inside of a country on the other, we understand the impossibility of eliminating wars without eliminating classes and creating Socialism, and in that we fully recognise the justice, the progressivism and the necessity of civil wars, *i.e.*, wars of an oppressed class against the oppressor, of slaves against the slaveholders, of serfs against the landowners, of wage-workers against the bourgeoisie.<sup>2</sup>

Quoting the famous dictum "War is the continuation of politics by other means", Lenin pointed out that to ascertain the real nature of a war, it was necessary to study the politics that preceded the war, the politics that led

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<sup>1</sup> "Letter to A. G. Shlyapnikov, 27, X, 1914", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Vol. 35, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, p. 219.



to and brought about the war. Before the current war, the ruling classes of England, France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Russia had pursued a policy of colonial robbery, of suppressing the labour movements, of oppressing foreign nations. The First World War was precisely the continuation of these imperialist politics. It was an imperialist war.

Lenin added:

The philistine does not understand that war is a "continuation of politics," and therefore limits himself to saying, "the enemy is attacking," "the enemy is invading my country," without trying to understand *why*, by *which class*, and for *what* political object the war is being conducted.<sup>1</sup>

While the social-chauvinists of the various countries set up a frantic clamour about "defence of the fatherland" and while each group vilified the other, Kautsky did his utmost to cover up their shameless betrayal. He said:

It is the right and duty of everyone to defend his fatherland; true internationalism consists in the recognition of this right for Socialists of all nations, including those who are at war with my nation. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Lenin angrily commented:

This matchless reasoning is such a boundlessly vulgar travesty of socialism that the best answer to it would be to coin a medal with the portraits of Wilhelm II and Nicholas II on one side and of Plekhanov and

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<sup>1</sup>"A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Lenin in "The Collapse of the Second International", *op. cit.*, p. 180.

Kautsky on the other. True internationalism, mind you, means that we must justify the shooting of German workers by French workers, and of French by the Germans in the name of "defence of the fatherland"!<sup>1</sup>

In order to justify their betrayal, Kautsky and his like falsely referred to Marx and Engels, saying that when wars broke out in 1854-55, 1870-71 and 1876-77, Marx and Engels invariably sided with one or another belligerent country. Exposing this sophistry, Lenin pointed out:

To compare the "continuation of the politics" of fighting against feudalism and absolutism—the politics of the bourgeoisie in its struggle for liberty—with the "continuation of the politics" of a decrepit, *i.e.*, imperialist, bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, of a bourgeoisie which has plundered the whole world, a reactionary bourgeoisie which, in alliance with feudal landlords, crushes the proletariat, is like comparing yards with pounds.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin said that the main features of the old wars referred to by Kautsky were these:

(1) They solved the problem of bourgeois-democratic reforms and the overthrow of absolutism or foreign oppression; (2) Objective prerequisites for a Socialist revolution were not yet ripe at that time and none of the Socialists *prior to the war* could speak of utilising wars for "hastening the collapse of capitalism" as did the Stuttgart (1907) and Basle (1912) resolutions; (3) There were no Socialist parties of any strength, mass appeal, and proven in battles, in the countries of *either* of the belligerent groups.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Collapse of the Second International", *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

To be brief, it is no wonder that Marx and the Marxists confined themselves to deciding *which* bourgeoisie's victory would be more harmless to (or more favourable for) the world proletariat at a time when it was impossible to think of a general proletarian movement against the governments and the bourgeoisie in all the belligerent countries.<sup>1</sup>

With his usual sophistry Kautsky said that the war was not "purely" imperialist but also had a national character, because though the ruling class had imperialist tendencies, the masses of the people (including the proletarian masses) had "national" strivings. Lenin pointed out that the only national element in the current war was that represented by the war of Serbia against Austria, and that this national element of the Serbo-Austrian war had and could have no serious significance in the European war as a whole. For 91 per cent of the participants, the war was of an imperialist character. He said:

. . . for anyone to argue that the war is not "purely" imperialist when we are discussing the flagrant deception of "the masses of the people" that is being perpetrated by the imperialists, who are deliberately screening the aims of naked robbery by "national" phraseology, shows that he is either an infinitely stupid pedant, or a pettifogger and deceiver.<sup>2</sup>

In unison with Plekhanov and Co. Kautsky said, "There is only one practical question: the victory or the defeat of our own country."<sup>3</sup> Lenin commented:

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<sup>1</sup> "Sophisms of Social-Chauvinists", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, pp. 173-74.

<sup>2</sup> "The Collapse of the Second International", *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "Civil War Slogan Illustrated", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, p. 161.

This is true; yes, if we were to forget Socialism and class struggle, this would be true. But if we do not forget Socialism, it is untrue! There is another *practical* question: whether we should perish in a war between slaveholders, ourselves blind and helpless slaves, or whether we should perish for the "attempts at fraternisation" between the workers, with the aim of casting off slavery?

Such is, *in reality*, the "practical" question.<sup>1</sup>

During the entire war period, Lenin persistently fought for the defeat of his own government in the war and for the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. He pointed out, in the article "Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War":

Revolution in wartime is civil war; and the *transformation* of war between governments into civil war is, on the one hand, facilitated by military reverses ("defeats") of governments; on the other hand, it is *impossible* really to strive for such a transformation without thereby facilitating defeat.<sup>2</sup>

#### IMPERIALISM IS MONOPOLISTIC, DECAYING, MORIBUND CAPITALISM

Kautsky regarded imperialism not as a stage of capitalism, but as a policy which was "preferred" by finance capital, the striving of "industrial" countries to annex "agrarian" countries. Lenin wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> "Civil War Slogan Illustrated", *ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 143.

This definition of Kautsky's is thoroughly false theoretically. The distinguishing feature of imperialism is the domination, *not* of industrial capital, but of finance capital, the striving to annex, *not only* agrarian countries, but *all kinds* of countries. Kautsky separates imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he separates monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics, in order to pave the way for his vulgar, bourgeois reformism in the shape of "disarmament," "ultra-imperialism" and similar piffle.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin made a systematic study of imperialism while refuting Kautsky's "theory" of imperialism, and he wrote many articles on the subject. Among these is his outstanding work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in which he summed up the development of capitalism during the half century following the publication of *Capital*, and revealed the nature, laws and contradictions of imperialism, the new stage of capitalism. He wrote:

Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 22, pp. 266-67.

In his article "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement", Lenin provided the following definition:

Imperialism is a special historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is three-fold: Imperialism is 1) monopolistic capitalism; 2) parasitic, or decaying, capitalism; 3) moribund capitalism. The substitution of monopoly for free competition is the fundamental economic feature, the *quintessence* of imperialism.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin showed that in the era of imperialism the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries becomes more acute, and the conditions for a revolutionary outbreak are ripe; the contradiction sharpens between the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries on the one hand and imperialist countries on the other, and national-liberation movements increasingly spread; the struggles between the imperialist countries for the division of the world becomes keener and the desire of each to strangle the other more intensified.

From this scientific analysis of imperialism, he drew the conclusion that "imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin discovered the law of the uneven economic and political development of capitalism. He showed that this phenomenon became more pronounced under imperialism. The spasmodic character of this uneven development explained why some countries which had lagged behind leaped ahead, while others which had been ahead

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<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *op. cit.*, p. 194.

now lagged behind. It was precisely this unevenness of capitalist economic and political development that rendered inevitable wars between the imperialist countries for the redivision of the world, enabled the proletariat to breach the front of imperialism at its weakest point and overthrow the rule of bourgeoisie, and made it possible for socialist revolution and construction to triumph first in one, or several countries.

Earlier, in 1915, in his "United States of Europe Slogan", Lenin wrote:

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible, first in a few or even in one single capitalist country. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organised its own socialist production, would *confront* the rest of the capitalist world, attract to itself the oppressed classes of other countries. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Then in "The War Program of the Proletarian Revolution", written in 1916, he further explained:

The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in the various countries. It cannot be otherwise under the commodity production system. From this it follows irrefutably that Socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously *in all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries. . . .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 571.

"ULTRA-IMPERIALISM"—AN OPPORTUNIST THEORY  
IN THE SERVICE OF MONOPOLY CAPITAL

Lenin exploded the falsity of the theory of "ultra-imperialism" advanced by Kautsky. He regarded it as the most subtle of opportunist theories, most skilfully counterfeited to appear scientific.

Kautsky asked:

Cannot the present imperialist policy be supplanted by a new, ultra-imperialist policy, which will introduce the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capitals?<sup>1</sup>

He went on to say that the end of the war "may lead to the strengthening of the weak rudiments of ultra-imperialism. . . . Its lessons may hasten developments for which we would have to wait a long time under peace conditions. If an agreement between nations, disarmament and a lasting peace are achieved, the worst of the causes that led to the growing moral decay of capitalism before the war may disappear. . . ." <sup>2</sup> He said that this "new" phase of "ultra-imperialism" "could create an era of new hopes and expectations within the framework of capitalism". <sup>3</sup>

With his theory of "ultra-imperialism" Kautsky wanted to prove that the contradictions of capitalism would be greatly mitigated. Lenin pointed out that free trade and

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Lenin in "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *op. cit.*, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Lenin in "The Collapse of the Second International", *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 185.



peaceful competition were possible and necessary during the former "peaceful" epoch of capitalism, when capital was in a position to increase the number of its colonies and dependent countries without hindrance, and when concentration of capital was still slight and no monopolist undertakings existed. However, in the imperialist epoch, though monopoly superseded free competition it did not abolish competition; on the contrary, it intensified it, thus compelling the capitalists to pass from peaceful expansion to armed struggle for the redivision of colonies and spheres of influence.

Lenin said:

The capitalists divide the world, not out of any particular malice, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to obtain profits. And they divide it "in proportion to capital", "in proportion to strength", because there cannot be any other method of division under commodity production and capitalism. But strength varies with the degree of economic and political development. In order to understand what is taking place, it is necessary to know what questions are settled by the changes in strength. The question as to whether these changes are "purely" economic or *non-economic* (e.g., military) is a secondary one, which cannot in the least affect fundamental views on the latest epoch of capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

He added:

. . . "inter-imperialist" or "ultra-imperialist" alliances, no matter what form they may assume, whether

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<sup>1</sup> "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *op. cit.*, p. 253.

of one imperialist coalition against another, or of a general alliance embracing *all* the imperialist powers, are *inevitably* nothing more than a "truce" in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on *one and the same* basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics.<sup>1</sup>

The only real, social significance which Kautsky's "ultra-imperialism" could have was that "it is a most reactionary method of consoling the masses with hopes of permanent peace being possible under capitalism, by distracting their attention from the sharp antagonisms and acute problems of the present times, and directing it towards illusory prospects of an imaginary 'ultra-imperialism' of the future".<sup>2</sup>

Kautsky played the part of the parson saying that many capitalists were urgently interested in universal peace and disarmament, and were not bound to imperialism, because any interests they might gain from war and armaments did not outweigh the damage they might suffer from the consequences. He advised the capitalists that the urge of capital to expand could be best promoted, "not by the violent methods of imperialism, but by peaceful democracy".<sup>3</sup> Lenin remarked:

And now that the armed conflict for Great Power privileges is a fact, Kautsky tries to *persuade* the cap-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *ibid.*, p. 289.

italists and the petty bourgeoisie to believe that war is a terrible thing, while disarmament is a good thing, in exactly the same way, and with exactly the same results, as a Christian parson tries from the pulpit to persuade the capitalist to believe that human love is God's commandment, as well as the yearning of the soul and the moral law of civilisation. The thing that Kautsky calls economic tendencies towards "ultra-imperialism" is precisely a petty-bourgeois attempt to *persuade* the financiers to refrain from doing evil.<sup>1</sup>

He showed that, as an international ideological trend, Kautskyism was both a product of the disintegration and decay of the Second International, and at the same time an inevitable outcrop of the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie who remained captive to bourgeois prejudices. He declared:

The growing world proletarian revolutionary movement in general, and the communist movement in particular, cannot dispense with an analysis and exposure of the theoretical errors of Kautskyism. The more so since pacifism and "democracy" in general, which lay no claim to Marxism whatever, but which, like Kautsky and Co., are obscuring the profundity of the contradictions of imperialism and the inevitable revolutionary crisis to which it gives rise, are still very widespread all over the world.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Collapse of the Second International", *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *op. cit.*, pp. 192-93.





## 10. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL-PACIFISM

PEACE PROPAGANDA UNACCOMPANIED BY THE  
CALL FOR REVOLUTION SERVES ONLY  
TO FOOL THE MASSES

At the same time as he strongly opposed imperialist war, Lenin also firmly opposed social-pacifism which renounced revolution. Shortly after the outbreak of the World War, he refuted social-pacifism in these terms:

One of the forms of deception of the working class is pacifism and the abstract preaching of peace. Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable. On the other hand, Social-Democrats cannot deny the positive significance of revolutionary wars, i.e., not imperialist wars, but such as were conducted, for instance, between 1789 and 1871, for the purpose of abolishing national oppression and creating national capitalist states out of the separate feudal states, or of possible wars for the defence of the gains of the victorious proletariat in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Propaganda of peace at the present time, if not accompanied by a call for revolutionary mass action, is only capable of spreading illusions, of demoralising the proletariat by imbuing it with belief in the humanitarianism of the bourgeoisie, and of making it a plaything in the hands of the secret diplomacy of the

belligerent countries. In particular, the idea that a so-called democratic peace is possible without a series of revolutions is profoundly mistaken.<sup>1</sup>

After the War had gone on for nearly a year and some representative bourgeois people repeatedly made overtures for peace, the opportunists also advanced the slogan of a so-called "democratic peace". Lenin pointed out that the millionaires "sympathized" with peace because they were afraid of revolution; at the same time they knew very clearly that so long as the bourgeoisie was not expropriated, the so-called "democratic" peace (without annexations or restriction of armament, etc.) was nothing but an illusion. But the opportunists, the supporters of Kautsky and the Socialists who called mournfully for peace were publicizing exactly this kind of philistine utopia. Lenin applied the term social-pacifists to describe those who used socialist phraseology to preach pacifism.

How should Marxists approach the question of peace? Lenin wrote:

The peace slogan can be advanced either in connection with definite peace conditions, or without any conditions at all, as a desire, not for a definite peace, but for peace in general (*Frieden ohne weiteres*). It is obvious that in the latter case we have a slogan that is not only not Socialist, but that is entirely devoid of meaning and sense. Absolutely everybody is in favour of peace, in general, including Kitchener, Joffre, Hindenburg, and Nicholas the Bloody, for *every one*

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<sup>1</sup> "Conference of the Sections of the R.S.D.L.P. Abroad", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 135.

of them wishes to end the war. The trouble is that every one of them advances imperialist (i.e., predatory in relation to other peoples), oppressive peace conditions for the benefit of "his" nation. Slogans must be advanced in order to make clear to the masses, by means of propaganda and agitation, the irreconcilable difference between Socialism and capitalism (imperialism); they must *not* be advanced in order to *reconcile* two hostile classes and two hostile political lines by means of a little word which "unites" the most divergent things.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin stressed:

The end of wars, peace among peoples, cessation of pillaging and violations are our ideal, to be sure, but only bourgeois sophists can seduce the masses with this ideal, while separating it from a direct and immediate preaching of revolutionary action.<sup>2</sup>

#### IMPERIALIST PEACE IS THE CONTINUATION OF THE IMPERIALIST POLICY OF WAR

During the second half of 1916 and the early days of 1917, there were growing signs in world politics of a turn from imperialist war to imperialist peace. The belligerents were worn out and their reserves exhausted. Finance capital had already squeezed a great deal out of the people through war profiteering and it was becoming diffi-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Peace Question", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.



cult to squeeze more. The people's discontent and anger were growing and revolutionary sentiment was steadily gaining ground. The imperialist bourgeoisie, therefore, began to plot a peace pact whereby they could "peacefully" parcel out the loot, disarm the millions of proletarians and, by a few unsubstantial concessions, cover up their scheme for continuing to plunder the colonies and strangle the weak nations. Social-pacifism spread rapidly in response to this change in imperialist policy.

Lenin pointed out that in principle what united the social-chauvinists and the social-pacifists was the fact that objectively both were servants of imperialism. Some served it by glorifying the imperialist war and describing it as a war for the "defence of the fatherland"; others served the same imperialism by using decorative phrases about a "democratic" peace, "exerting all their humanitarianism, their love of humanity, their celestial virtue (and their high intellect) to *embellish* the coming imperialist peace!"<sup>1</sup>

Lenin said that the social-pacifists could not understand the fundamental Marxist thesis on war and peace. He wrote:

War is the continuation, by forcible means, of the politics pursued by the ruling classes of the belligerent Powers long before the outbreak of war. Peace is a continuation of the *very same* politics, with a *registration* of the changes brought about in the relation of forces of the antagonists as a result of military operations. War does not change the direction in which poli-

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<sup>1</sup> "A Turn in World Politics", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 426.

tics developed prior to the war; it only *accelerates* that development.<sup>1</sup>

The peace the imperialists can bring about can only be an imperialist peace, in which they continue to prepare for imperialist war. To the imperialists, "war is a 'branch of industry,' similar to forestry: it takes decades for trees of proper size — that is to say, for a sufficiently abundant supply of adult 'cannon fodder' — to grow up".<sup>2</sup> Lenin scientifically predicted that "humanity may — if the worst comes to the worst — go through a second imperialist war, if . . . revolution does not come out of the present war".<sup>3</sup>

WHILE THERE IS STILL CLASS OPPRESSION,  
THE DEMAND FOR "DISARMAMENT" AMOUNTS TO  
THE ABANDONMENT OF ALL REVOLUTION

In the midst of the great calamities caused by the imperialist war and the general war-weariness of the people, some Social-Democrats put forward the slogan of "disarmament", and argued in favour of deleting the point about "militia" or the "armed nation" in the Social-Democratic minimum programme. Their main argument was that the demand for disarmament was the clearest, most decisive and most consistent expression of the struggle against all militarism and against all war.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Peace Programme", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> "A Turn in World Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 428.

<sup>3</sup> "The War Program of the Proletarian Revolution", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 578.

In "The War Program of the Proletarian Revolution" and "The 'Disarmament' Slogan", Lenin thoroughly exploded this idle fancy. He said, "Socialists cannot, without ceasing to be Socialists, be opposed to all war."<sup>1</sup> In the epoch of imperialism there were three kinds of revolutionary war: first, national-liberation wars against imperialism by the people in the colonial and dependent countries; second, the civil wars of the oppressed and exploited classes against the oppressing and exploiting class; third, wars of self-defence by a socialist country against the intervention of capitalist-imperialist countries which could still break out after socialist revolution had achieved victory in one or more countries. "Socialists have never been, nor can they ever be, opposed to revolutionary wars," he said.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin categorically declared:

An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot forget, unless we have become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, that we are living in a class society, that there is no way out, and there can be none, except by means of the class struggle and the overthrow of the power of the ruling class.

In every class society, whether it is based on slavery, serfdom or, as at present, on wage labour, the oppressing class is armed. The modern standing army, and even the modern militia—even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, Switzerland, for example—represents the bourgeoisie armed *against* the proletariat. This is such an elementary truth that it is

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 569.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

hardly necessary to dwell on it. It is sufficient to recall the use of troops (including the republican-democratic militia) against strikers, which occurs in all capitalist countries without exception. The fact that the bourgeoisie is armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest, most fundamental, most important facts in modern capitalist society.

Only *after* the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historical mission, to throw all armaments on the scrap-heap; the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin made the penetrating remark that to demand "disarmament" while imperialism existed was "tantamount to the complete abandonment of the point of view of the class struggle, the renunciation of all thought of revolution". He said that there was little Marxism in this, and that such advocacy of "disarmament" was "the most vulgar opportunism, it is bourgeois pacifism".<sup>2</sup>

As against the slogan of the opportunists, the Marxist slogan was: "the arming of the proletariat for the purpose of vanquishing, expropriating and disarming the bourgeoisie. These are the only tactics a revolutionary class can adopt, tactics which follow logically from the whole *objective development* of capitalist militarism, and dictated by that development."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The 'Disarmament' Slogan", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 353, 354.

<sup>3</sup> "The War Program of the Proletarian Revolution", *op. cit.*, pp. 573-74.

## 11. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPORTUNISM ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

Imperialism meant that capital had outgrown the framework of national states; it meant the extension and sharpening of national oppression on a new historical basis. The plunder and oppression of the colonial and dependent countries by the imperialists aroused the opposition of the people of the oppressed nations. The national-liberation movement was surging forward over vast areas. During the rise of capitalism, the national question had usually been regarded as one within the "civilized" countries in Europe. Under imperialism it outgrew the boundaries of the national states and became an international question of over-all importance, a worldwide question of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples in the dependent and colonial countries from the yoke of imperialism. A correct solution of the national question was essential if the international alliance of the proletariat of all nations was to be strengthened and victory in the anti-imperialist struggle of the proletariat and oppressed nations of the world was to be assured.

In the new historical conditions Lenin developed the teachings of Marx on the national question and formulated the programme and policy of the Bolshevik Party on the national question and on the national and colonial question. In his articles "Critical Remarks on the Na-

tional Question", "On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", "Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", "The Pamphlet by Junius" and "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'", all of which he wrote shortly before or during World War I, Lenin fully expounded the Party's programme and policy on the national question and the national and colonial question and sharply criticized the opportunist viewpoint on these questions.

THE DIVISION OF NATIONS INTO OPPRESSING AND  
OPPRESSED NATIONS, AND THE TWO HISTORICAL  
TRENDS ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The opportunists denied the existence of the antagonistic contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in each country on the one hand, and on the other, refused to acknowledge the existence of the antagonistic contradiction between the oppressed nations of the world and imperialism. Lenin pointed out that, as against the philistine, opportunist utopia of a peaceful union of equal nations under imperialism, "the programme of Social-Democracy must advance the thesis that the fundamental, essential and inevitable division of nations under imperialism is that between oppressing nations and oppressed nations".<sup>1</sup> This distinction "is the *essence* of imperialism, which is *falsely* evaded by the social-chauvinists, and by Kautsky. This distinction is not important from the point of view of bourgeois pacifism, or the petty-

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<sup>1</sup>"The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 271.

bourgeois utopia of peaceful competition among independent nations under capitalism, but it is most important from the point of view of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism."<sup>1</sup> He also said, "Europeans often forget that colonial peoples are *also* nations, but to tolerate such 'forgetfulness' is to tolerate chauvinism."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin enunciated the two historical trends on the national question during the development of capitalism. He said:

The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with Lenin's views, Stalin indicated, in "The Foundations of Leninism":

For imperialism these two tendencies represent irreconcilable contradictions; because imperialism cannot exist without exploiting colonies and forcibly retaining them within the framework of the "integral whole"; because imperialism can bring nations together only by means of annexations and colonial

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<sup>1</sup> "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> "Critical Remarks on the National Question", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 20, p. 27.

conquest, without which imperialism is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

For communism, on the contrary, these tendencies are but two sides of a single cause — the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism; because communism knows that the union of peoples in a single world economic system is possible only on the basis of mutual confidence and voluntary agreement, and that the road to the formation of a voluntary union of peoples lies through the separation of the colonies from the "integral" imperialist "whole," through the transformation of the colonies into independent states.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATIONAL- LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE COLONIAL AND DEPENDENT COUNTRIES

Lenin repeatedly explained that the fundamental aim of the Marxists was to unite the working people of all countries to fight imperialism and build socialism together. To achieve this goal they must resolutely oppose national oppression, take a firm stand for national equality, uphold the right to self-determination of the oppressed nations of the colonial and dependent countries, and fully support the national-liberation movement against imperialism.

Lenin had a high opinion of the importance of the struggle for liberation of the oppressed nations. He held that their struggle inevitably intensified and enlarged the crisis of the capitalist world. It was a great force which

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<sup>1</sup> Stalin, *Works*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, Vol. 6, p. 152.



dealt imperialism blows from the rear and shook the foundations of imperialist rule; it was a great ally of the proletarian revolution. He said:

. . . small nations, powerless as an *independent* factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the *real* power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the socialist proletariat.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin paid very great attention to the national-liberation movement of the colonial and dependent countries and warmly praised the militant struggle of the people of these countries against imperialist oppression. In the article "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx", he wrote:

. . . the opportunists had scarcely congratulated themselves on the inauguration of "social peace" and on the fact that storms were needless under "democracy" when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian Revolution was followed by the Turkish, the Persian and the Chinese revolutions. It is in this era of storms and their "repercussion" in Europe that we are now living.<sup>2</sup>

He held that the Chinese revolution showed that "one fourth of the population of the globe has passed, so to speak, from slumber to light, to movement, to struggle".<sup>3</sup> In the article "Backward Europe and Advanced Asia" Lenin reiterated, "Everywhere in Asia a mighty dem-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> "Regenerated China", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 4, p. 312.

ocratic movement is growing, spreading and gaining in strength. . . . *Hundreds* of millions of people are awakening to life, light and liberty.”<sup>1</sup>

SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION MOVEMENT  
OF THE OPPRESSED NATIONS AND OPPOSING  
REACTIONARY NATIONALISM

Lenin pointed out that, under imperialism, the national and colonial question was part of the whole question of proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolutionary movement in the imperialist countries had to form an anti-imperialist united front with the national-liberation movement of the colonial and dependent countries in order to defeat the common enemy and attain final victory. He said that when the proletariat in the advanced countries rose to overthrow the bourgeoisie, the oppressed nations would by no means look on with folded arms; they would certainly take the opportunity to rise up and wage wars of national liberation. He added:

. . . what is needed for their success is either the combined efforts of an enormous number of the inhabitants of the oppressed countries . . . or a *particularly* favourable combination of circumstances in the international situation (for example, when the intervention of the imperialist Powers is paralysed by exhaustion, by war, by their mutual antagonisms, etc.), or a *simultaneous* uprising of the proletariat of one of the Great Powers against the bourgeoisie (this latter case stands first in order from the standpoint of what

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 315.

is desirable and advantageous for the victory of the proletariat).<sup>1</sup>

He also stated:

. . . the hundreds of millions of toilers in Asia, have a reliable ally in the proletariat of all the civilized countries. No force on earth can prevent its victory, which will liberate both the peoples of Europe and the peoples of Asia.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin emphasized the need for the proletariat of the imperialist countries to give active support to the national-liberation movement of the oppressed nations. In his article "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", he indicated that Marx, placing the interests of the proletarian revolution above anything else, always put the fundamental principle of internationalism and socialism in the forefront, as when he said, "No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations." Lenin remarked:

Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation — and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing more nor less than the recognition of the right to self-determination — but they must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national liberation in these countries and assist their rebellion

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<sup>1</sup> "The Pamphlet by Junius", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> "Backward Europe and Advanced Asia", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 316.

— and if need be, their revolutionary war — *against* the imperialist powers that oppress them.<sup>1</sup>

In the article "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", he said:

If we do not want to betray socialism, we *must* support *every* rebellion against our main enemy, the bourgeoisie of the big states, provided it is not the rebellion of a reactionary class. By refusing to support rebellions of annexed territories we objectively become annexationists. Precisely "in the era of imperialism," which is the era of the incipient social revolution, the proletariat makes special efforts to support the rebellion of annexed territories today, in order that tomorrow, or simultaneously with the rebellion, it may attack the bourgeoisie of the "Great" Power which is weakened by that rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Lenin also stressed that Marxists only support what is progressive in the national movement. It is progressive to abolish all kinds of feudal and national oppression and fight for the right of the people and nations to self-determination. They should be firmly supported. To go beyond this line of demarcation and give support to reactionary nationalism is to betray the proletariat and side with the bourgeoisie. The opportunists forget precisely this line of demarcation on the national question.

Lenin taught that in every country the proletariat should value "the alliance of the proletarians of all nations" above everything else and place it above every-

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 279.

thing else, and should evaluate "every national demand . . . *from the angle* of the class struggle of the workers".<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that the bourgeoisie always tried to present the demands of its own class as those of the entire nation and placed them in the forefront, and what the bourgeoisie was most concerned with was guarantees for its own interests — "hence the perennial policy of coming to terms with the bourgeoisie of other nations to the detriment of the proletariat. For the proletariat, however, the important thing is to strengthen its class against the bourgeoisie and to educate the masses in the spirit of consistent democracy and Socialism."<sup>2</sup> Lenin said:

. . . the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations *merely talks* about national revolt, while in actual practice it enters into reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nations behind the backs of, *and against*, its own people.<sup>3</sup>

He further declared:

*Inasmuch* as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressing one, we are always, in every case, and more resolutely than anyone else, *in favour*; for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But *inasmuch* as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for *its own* bourgeois nationalism we are opposed. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressing nation and do not in any

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<sup>1</sup> "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 334-35.

<sup>3</sup> "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'", *op. cit.*, p. 248.

way condone the strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation.<sup>1</sup>

#### REFUTING THE FALLACY OF THE OPPORTUNISTS ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The opportunists made frenzied attacks on the programme which Lenin put forward for solving the national question. On the pretext that the strengthening of ties between nations played a progressive role in the epoch of imperialism, the opportunists of the Second International, the Russian Liquidators and the bourgeois nationalists took up a stand in favour of the imperialist policy of annexations and strongly opposed national self-determination. The Kautskyites hypocritically gave verbal support to national self-determination, but actually chimed in completely with the opportunists and their like, saying it was "excessive" to demand that the oppressed nations should have freedom of secession. Trotsky took an eclectic stand and, by evading an answer to the practical question of how the oppressed nations should be treated, objectively supported social-chauvinism. The opportunists of Russia and of the Second International, following in the wake of the bourgeoisie, counterposed such national reformist slogans of theirs as "cultural-national autonomy" to the revolutionary programme on the self-determination of nations drawn up by Lenin.

Lenin said:

The imperialist epoch has transformed all the "Great" Powers into oppressors of a number of nations, and the

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<sup>1</sup> "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *op. cit.*, p. 336.

development of imperialism will inevitably lead to a clearer division of trends on this question also in international Social-Democracy.<sup>1</sup>

He censured the opportunists' betrayal of Marxism on the national question, saying that if in advocating the amalgamation of nations in general the Social-Democrats of an oppressing nation were to forget even for a moment that the rulers of their own countries also stood for amalgamation with small nations — by means of annexations — then those Social-Democrats would be abettors of imperialism.

Lenin exposed the reactionary essence of the slogan "cultural-national autonomy", pointing out that it was a bourgeois swindle. Every national culture, he said, contained elements of democratic and socialist culture. But every nation also had a culture of the landlords, priests and bourgeoisie which was in the dominant position. The "cultural-national autonomy" advocated by the opportunists and the faith in a "supra-class national culture" which they spread fully conformed to the interests of the bourgeoisie and helped the landlords, priests and bourgeoisie to use their ruling position in the realm of culture to fool and deceive the working people.

The so-called "cultural-national autonomy", Lenin pointed out, would actually separate culture and education from the sphere of economic and political struggle. He said:

It is primarily in the economic and political sphere that a serious class struggle is waged in any capitalist society. To separate the sphere of education from

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<sup>1</sup> "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *op. cit.*, p. 305.

this is, firstly, absurdly utopian, because schools (like "national culture" in general) cannot be separated from economics and politics; secondly, it is the economic and political life of a capitalist country that *necessitates* at every step the smashing of the absurd and outmoded national barriers and prejudices, whereas separation of the school system and the like, would only perpetuate, intensify and strengthen "pure" clericalism and "pure" bourgeois chauvinism.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the Left Social-Democrats also held wrong views on the national question. They maintained that there would be no more national wars, and that all wars were imperialist in the epoch of imperialism. Lenin pointed out that this view was not only obviously fallacious in theory, but very harmful in a practical political sense. He said:

... it gives rise to the stupid propaganda for "disarmament," as if no other war but reactionary wars are possible; it is the cause of the still more stupid and downright reactionary indifference towards national movements.<sup>2</sup>

He affirmed, "National wars *against* the imperialist Powers are not only possible and probable, they are inevitable, they are *progressive* and *revolutionary*. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin said:

Bourgeois nationalism and proletarian internationalism — these are the two irreconcilably hostile slogans

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<sup>1</sup> "Critical Remarks on the National Question", *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> "The Pamphlet by Junius", *op. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



that correspond to the two great class camps throughout the capitalist world, and express the *two* policies (nay, the two world outlooks) in the national question.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin was resolutely opposed to reactionary bourgeois nationalism and the diverse opportunist ideological trends on the national question, and demonstrated an extremely clear-cut and firm proletarian-internationalist stand. His teachings are the guiding principles for the Bolshevik Party and revolutionaries of all countries in dealing with the national question and the national and colonial question.

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<sup>1</sup> "Critical Remarks on the National Question", *op. cit.*, p. 26.





## 12. UNITING THE LEFT AND HOLDING ALOFT THE BANNER OF PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

During the War, three trends took shape in the working-class movement in many countries: first, the Right, or the social-chauvinist trend; second, the "Centre" represented by Kautsky, or the covert social-chauvinist trend; third, the Left, or the genuine internationalist trend.

Within the parties of all countries the Left were few in number at the time and were not yet organized as an international force. This created serious difficulties for the international proletarian revolutionary cause. An important task at the time was, therefore, "to unite these Marxian elements, however small their number may be at the beginning, to revive in their name the words of real Socialism now forgotten, to call the workers of all countries to relinquish chauvinism and raise the old banner of Marxism".<sup>1</sup> It was obvious that none other than Lenin could shoulder this task.

Lenin carried it out under very difficult conditions. Correspondence and communication presented very great difficulties at that time. There were often no funds and sometimes even no money for the bare necessities of life. But no difficulty could intimidate Lenin. He not only

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<sup>1</sup> "Socialism and War", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, p. 248.

successfully led the Bolsheviks at home and abroad, but established contact with the Left in the revolutionary movements of various countries, using a variety of channels. He worked with tremendous energy in Switzerland organizing the printing and distribution of the publications of the Bolsheviks. The *Social-Democrat* reappeared on November 1, 1914, shortly after the War broke out. It was in this journal that Lenin published his famous manifesto on war, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy". Through this newspaper and other publications Lenin's ideas, breaking down innumerable barriers, became accessible to the revolutionary Social-Democrats, and the people generally in all countries. As a result of his unrelenting efforts, the Left in all countries gradually increased in number and, from 1915 onward, began to take the first steps towards a new international unity.

#### AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES OF WOMEN AND YOUTH

The International Conference of Socialist Women was held in Berne in March 1915. It was convened at the suggestion of the women's organizations affiliated to the Bolshevik Party and was presided over by Klara Zetkin, the well-known activist of the international women's movement. Lenin gave personal guidance to the work of the Russian delegation and drew up a draft resolution for the delegation to be submitted to the conference for discussion. However, because of the conciliationist attitude of the German delegation, the draft resolution submitted by the Bolsheviks was rejected. The resolution which was adopted by the conference exposed the imperialist nature

of the War and condemned the slogan of "the defence of the fatherland", but it only called on the proletariat to struggle for "the sake of peace" and said nothing whatsoever about the betrayal by the opportunists. Lenin declared that there was a difference in principle between the draft resolution submitted by the Bolsheviks and the one adopted by the conference. He said, "Two conceptions of the world, two evaluations of the war and the tasks of the International, two tactics of proletarian parties came into conflict at the conference." One view was that the Second International had not collapsed; there was no strong "internal enemy" in the shape of opportunism. Hence the conclusion that "we will not condemn anybody". The other, entirely contrary view was that "nothing is more harmful, more disastrous to the proletarian cause than the continuation of inner Party *diplomacy* in relation to the opportunists and social-chauvinists".<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the International Conference of Socialist Women, the International Socialist Youth also held a conference in Berne. It elected the International Bureau of Socialist Youth, which published a paper, called *Jugend-Internationale*, for which Lenin wrote.

Referring to these two conferences, Lenin said:

These gatherings were animated by the best intentions, but they . . . did not map out a fighting line for the internationalists. . . . At best, they confined themselves to a repetition of old resolutions without pointing out to the workers that, without a struggle against

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<sup>1</sup> "The Fight Against Social-Chauvinism", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 223.

the social-chauvinists, the cause of Socialism is hopeless.<sup>1</sup>

THE ZIMMERWALD CONFERENCE—AN IMMENSE  
ACHIEVEMENT IN UNITING THE  
REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS

Establishing close contact with the Left revolutionaries in the parties of various countries, through representatives of the Bolsheviks or by correspondence, Lenin made preparations during this period to convene an international conference of Left-wing socialists. Before it took place he finished writing his "Socialism and War", which was published in Russian, German and French. He also drew up a draft resolution for submission to the conference and sent it for discussion to the Left in the parties of the various countries. It helped the workers in Europe to know the Bolshevik attitude to the war and the revolutionary tactics which the international proletariat should adopt in the war.

The International Socialist Conference was held in Zimmerwald in September 1915. The majority of the 38 delegates who attended were Kautskyites or near-Kautskyites and only 8 were Left delegates. Lenin attended, and he organized and led the Left in a sharp struggle against the Kautskyites. As the genuine Left were in the minority, the draft resolution which Lenin had drawn up was rejected. However, as a result of the struggle which he waged, some important Marxist principles were embodied in the manifesto ultimately adopted by the conference. This manifesto declared that

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<sup>1</sup> "Socialism and War", *op. cit.*, p. 245.

the war was imperialist; it denounced the slogan of "the defence of the fatherland" and condemned the opportunists for their violation of the Stuttgart and Basle resolutions.

Commenting on the Zimmerwald conference, Lenin said that the manifesto it adopted signified a step towards a break with opportunism and social-chauvinism. At the same time, he said, it suffered from inconsistency, timidity, and failure to say everything that ought to have been said. It made no direct mention of the betrayal by the parties of the Second International and said nothing about the collapse of the Second International and the reasons for it. Nor did it directly, openly and clearly state the revolutionary methods of struggle which the working class had to adopt.

When the manifesto came up for adoption, the Left-wing delegates headed by Lenin, although they added their signatures to it, submitted a statement pointing out its weaknesses. Lenin said:

Was our Central Committee right in signing this manifesto, suffering as it does from lack of consistency, and from timidity? We think so. That we disagree, that not only our Central Committee but the whole international Left Wing section of the Conference adhering to the principles of revolutionary Marxism disagrees, is only expressed both in a special resolution, in a separate draft manifesto and in a separate declaration on the motives of voting for a compromise manifesto. We did not hide one iota of our views, slogans, tactics. The German edition of our pamphlet, *Socialism and War*, was distributed at the conference. We have broadcasted, are broadcasting, and shall broadcast our



views. . . . It would be sectarianism to refuse to take this step *together* with the minority of the German, French, Swedish, Norwegian, Swiss Socialists.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin made a high appraisal of the Left at the Zimmerwald conference and of their activities. He remarked:

The ideological struggle at the conference was waged between a compact group of internationalists, revolutionary Marxists, and the vacillating near-Kautskyists who formed the Right wing of the conference. The compactness of the former group is one of the most important facts and one of the greatest achievements of the conference.<sup>2</sup>

He also pointed out:

From the very outset, the Zimmerwald International adopted a vacillating, "Kautskyite," "Centrist" position, which immediately compelled the *Zimmerwald Left* to dissociate itself, to separate itself from the rest, and to issue *its own* manifesto. . . .<sup>3</sup>

SOME KINDS OF COMPROMISES MAY BE CONCLUDED  
WITH THE KAUTSKYITES, BUT THE POLITICAL AND  
IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE MUST NEVER CEASE

After the Zimmerwald conference the Left, which had become united, set up their own Standing Bureau and

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<sup>1</sup> "The First Step", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XVIII, pp. 343-44.

<sup>2</sup> "Revolutionary Marxists at the International Socialist Conference, September 5-8, 1915", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 5, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 52.

published their magazine *Vorbote*. Lenin shifted the focus of the anti-Kautskyite struggle, concentrated it on those who had attended the Zimmerwald conference and began to work for a second International Socialist Conference of the Zimmerwald movement.

In February 1916, Lenin attended the Enlarged Meeting of the International Socialist Committee, which was held in Berne. This meeting adopted proposals and many articles of "The Draft Resolution Concerning the Convocation of the Second Socialist Conference" which he had drafted for the second conference.

On the eve of the conference Lenin instructed the branches of the Bolshevik Party abroad to mobilize all the possible forces of the Zimmerwald Left and to elect Left delegates to the conference.

With the aim of exposing and repudiating the "democratic" peace programme of the Kautskyites and of formulating principles to guide the activities of the Left, Lenin wrote "The 'Peace Programme'" and "Proposals Submitted by the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party to the Second Socialist Conference". He explained:

... the main and fundamental task of the Socialists in the struggle for a lasting and democratic peace must be: firstly, explanation to the masses of the necessity of *revolutionary mass struggle*, systematic propaganda for it and the creation of the corresponding organizations; secondly, exposure of the *hypocrisy* and *lies* of the bourgeois-pacifist as of the socialist, and particularly the Kautskyite phrases about peace and the "una-

nimity" of the Second International on the question of the "peace programme".<sup>1</sup>

The Second Zimmerwald International Socialist Conference took place in Kienthal in April 1916. It mainly discussed problems concerning the fight to bring the war to an end and the standpoint of the proletariat on the question of peace. The Left gained in strength at this meeting. Headed by Lenin, the Left put forward a joint draft resolution on the question of peace. Although this was rejected, the meeting adopted a resolution, as a result of the struggle put up by Lenin, censuring the International Socialist Bureau and condemning social-pacifism. The resolution denounced the social-chauvinist stand taken by the International Socialist Bureau, and indicated that "lasting peace cannot be built on the social foundations of capitalism" and that "the struggle for lasting peace can only be encompassed in the struggle for the realization of socialism".<sup>2</sup> It warned the workers not to believe the lies of the pacifists whatever cloak of socialism they might don.

However, the Kienthal conference did not accept the basic principles of the Bolsheviks, namely, the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war, the defeat of one's own imperialist government in the war. The Bolsheviks voted for the limited manifesto and resolution with reservations.

Later on, Lenin remarked:

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<sup>1</sup> "Proposals of the CC RSDLP to the Second Socialist Conference Convened by the ISC (Berne)", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 36, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> *Resolution of the Second Zimmerwald International Socialist Conference Concerning the Attitude of the Proletariat Towards the Peace Question.*

During the war we concluded certain compromises with the "Kautskyites," with the Left Mensheviks (Martov), and with a section of the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" (Chernov and Natanson); we were together with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal and issued joint manifestoes; but we never ceased and never relaxed our ideological and political struggle against the "Kautskyites," Martov and Chernov. . . .<sup>1</sup>

IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF NUMBERS, BUT OF GIVING  
CORRECT EXPRESSION TO THE IDEAS AND POLICY  
OF THE TRULY REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT

For a long time in the struggle against the opportunism of the Second International, the revolutionary group headed by Lenin was in the minority. But, as Lenin said, "The question is not one of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policy of the truly revolutionary proletariat"; it was on the internationalists, and on their deeds alone, that "the future of Socialism depends".<sup>2</sup>

In one of his letters Lenin wrote:

The genuinely-revolutionary internationalists are numerically weak? Go tell your tales! Let us take as examples France in 1780 and Russia in 1900. The conscious and resolute revolutionaries, who in the first case were representatives of the bourgeoisie — the revolutionary class of that epoch — and in the second case

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<sup>1</sup> "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *op. cit.*, pp. 54 and 51.

were representatives of the revolutionary class of the present time — the proletariat, were extremely weak numerically. They were mere units, comprising at a maximum only 1/10,000 or even 1/100,000 of their class. Yet several years later these same units, this same minority which was supposedly so negligible, led after itself the masses — millions and tens of millions of people. Why? Because this minority truly represented the interests of these masses, because it believed in the coming revolution, because it was willing selflessly to serve it.<sup>1</sup>

“Numerical weakness?” Lenin went on to ask, “But since when have revolutionaries made their politics dependent on the fact of whether they are in the majority or the minority?”<sup>2</sup>

The evidence showed that Lenin’s diligent efforts were not in vain. Although the Zimmerwaldists later disintegrated as a result of sabotage by the Kautskyites, the Left that had rallied around Lenin eventually grew stronger. During the years of war and revolution it was these unflinching Marxist fighters who became the true leaders of the revolutionary masses in various countries, the vanguards for destroying bourgeois rule, the backbone and nucleus of the international solidarity of the proletariat.

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<sup>1</sup> “Open Letter to Boris Souvarine”, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Vol. 23, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*





### 13. THE STRUGGLE FOR THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

#### THE BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION MUST BE TURNED INTO A SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The growing revolutionary movement could be checked neither by imperialist-bourgeois persecution and suppression nor by opportunist preaching about "civil peace". The revolutionary crisis caused by the imperialist war broke out first in Russia. The Bolshevik Party which had been nurtured by Lenin himself, successfully put into effect the slogan "Convert the imperialist war into a civil war", having firmly resisted the corrosion of chauvinism during the period of the war and having long made adequate ideological, political and organizational preparations along the lines laid down by Lenin.

In March 1917 (February in the old Russian calendar), the Bolsheviks led the workers in armed uprising, overthrew the tsarist government and established the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. But while the Bolsheviks were in the streets leading the masses in struggle against the enemy, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries took advantage of the occasion, pushed their way into the Soviets and secured a majority there. At the same time, they collaborated with the bourgeoisie and established the Provisional Government.



Thus, at the very outset of the revolution a dual power came into being. In essence, the Provisional Government was a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, while the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

Informed of the February Revolution, Lenin hastily prepared to return from exile and give direct leadership to the Russian revolution which was already under way. Before setting out, he wrote letter after letter telling the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary masses that they must push the revolution ahead, must maintain the independence of the Party, and must do all their work in a revolutionary way. In one of these letters, dated March 17, Lenin wrote:

Our immediate task is to widen the scope of our work, to organise the masses, to arouse new social strata, the backward elements, the rural population, the domestic servants, to form nuclei in the army for the purpose of carrying on a systematic and detailed *exposé* of the new government, to prepare the seizure of power by the *Soviets of Workers' Deputies*. Only this power can give bread, *peace*, and freedom.

Right now, complete the rout of reaction; refuse *all* confidence or support to the new government (not a shadow of confidence to Kerensky, Gvozdev, Chkhenskeli, Chkheidze and Co.); keep armed watchfulness; armed preparation of a broader base for a *higher* stage.<sup>1</sup>

On April 3, 1917, Lenin arrived back in Russia from Switzerland. At the conclusion of his speech at the mass meeting to welcome him, he used the slogan "Long live

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<sup>1</sup> "Two Letters to A.M. Kollontai", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XX, Book I, p. 21.

the socialist revolution!". The following day he published the famous "April Theses" which provided answers to the important problems confronting the Russian revolution and laid down the line of development for the socialist revolution. In the Theses he pointed out that the war which the Provisional Government was carrying on after the February Revolution was still an imperialist war and that only by overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie could it be ended. The Provisional Government represented state power in the hands of the bourgeoisie and therefore should be given no support whatsoever. All power should be transferred to the Soviets. The Theses clearly stated that the task of the Bolsheviks and the people of the whole country was to struggle for the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. Lenin wrote:

The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that it represents a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution — which, owing to the insufficient class consciousness and organization of the proletariat, placed the power in the hands of the bourgeoisie — *to the second* stage, which must place the power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry.<sup>1</sup>

The opportunists opposed Lenin's revolutionary line. Plekhanov published an article in which he said:

This has been forgotten here by people who summon the Russian labouring masses to seize political power, an act which would be logical only if the objective condi-

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<sup>1</sup> "On the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 14.

tions necessary for a social revolution were present. These conditions are not yet present. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Right up to the eve of the October Revolution the opportunists continued to use such hackneyed phrases as: "We are not yet ripe for Socialism";<sup>2</sup> the proletariat "will not be able to set this [the state] apparatus in motion"; "the situation is exceptionally complicated"; the proletariat "will be incapable of resisting the whole of that pressure of the hostile forces".<sup>3</sup> Their arguments were simply Russian versions of the opportunist theory of the Second International. They made a dogma of the particular principle that socialism cannot triumph in one country alone, which had been put forward by Marx in the light of the conditions in the 19th century. Like parrots the Russian opportunists repeated that it was quite impossible for backward Russia to launch a socialist revolution on its own.

After the February Revolution Lenin wrote many articles denouncing the antiquated theories of the opportunists against the carrying out of socialist revolution in Russia. He said that victory was assured for the proletariat in Russia if it took power, for behind them stood the immeasurably bigger world forces of the proletariat. He added that the entire capitalist class would offer most stubborn resistance, but this resistance would be broken by organizing the entire population into Soviets. As for the ability of the proletariat to lay hold of the state ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "One of the Basic Questions", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XX, Book I, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXI, Book I, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Lenin in *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 19.

paratus, Lenin pointed out that only when the proletariat and the toiling masses took power would they be in a position to learn how to administer the state, and they would certainly learn in the course of practice. He said:

The chief thing now is to abandon the prejudiced bourgeois-intelligentsia view that only special officials, who by their entire social position are entirely dependent upon capital, can administer the state.<sup>1</sup>

In denouncing the argument that "the situation is exceptionally complicated", Lenin pointed out:

. . . a revolution, a real, profound, a "people's" revolution, to use Marx's expression, is the incredibly complicated and painful process of the dying out of the old and birth of the new social order, of the mode of life of tens of millions of people. . . .

If the situation were not exceptionally complicated there would be no revolution. If you are afraid of wolves don't go into the forest.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE OLD STATE MACHINE MUST BE SMASHED AND A NEW ONE BUILT

Lenin declared:

The basic question in any revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no conscious participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> "On the Dual Power", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 20.

The imperialist war greatly accelerated the process of change from monopoly capitalism to state monopoly capitalism. The state was merging more and more with the all-powerful capitalist associations. The imperialist countries had become "military convict prisons for the workers". How was the proletariat to deal with the bourgeois state machine and what kind of state machine should the victorious proletariat set up? This became the most pressing problem of both theory and practice at the time when the international proletarian revolution was making conspicuous progress and the opportunists were grossly distorting the Marxist theory of state. While in Switzerland, Lenin had made an intensive theoretical study of the problem and prepared copious notes on it. On his return to Russia, under extremely trying and dangerous conditions he wrote his great work *The State and Revolution*. It provided a penetrating reply to the basic question confronting the revolution, defending and developing the Marxist theory of the state, scientifically expounding the historical function of the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the entire period of transition from capitalism to communism, and ruthlessly criticizing the opportunists, especially Kautsky.

Kautsky had expressed the view that "we can safely leave the solution of the problem of the proletarian dictatorship to the future".<sup>1</sup> He had declared that "we are not discussing here the form the 'future state' will be given by victorious Social-Democracy, but how the present state is changed by our opposition".<sup>2</sup> He had also said, "The aim of our political struggle remains, as

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "The State and Revolution", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government.”<sup>1</sup>

Basing himself on the literature of Marxism, Lenin summed up the experience of the proletariat in its struggle for state power from the middle of the 19th century onwards and elaborated the principle that the proletariat cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine, that the revolutionary proletariat must smash the old state machine. He said:

Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the *old* state machine, but in this class *smashing* this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a *new* machine. Kautsky slurs over this *basic* idea of Marxism, or he had utterly failed to understand it.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin considered that the only way for the proletariat to establish its rule was to set up a state modelled on the Paris Commune. The Soviets which had been set up during the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and February 1917 were of the type of the dictatorship of the proletariat established by the Paris Commune. Lenin said:

The teaching on the class struggle, when applied by Marx to the question of the state and of the socialist revolution, leads of necessity to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of power shared with none and relying directly upon the armed force of the masses. The overthrow of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> “The State and Revolution”, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming transformed into the *ruling class*, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organizing *all* the toiling and exploited masses for the new economic order.<sup>1</sup>

In the same work Lenin pointed out that the state was the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, that it was an instrument for the oppression of one class by another and a special repressive force. Thus he thoroughly exposed the real nature of the bourgeois state and bourgeois democracy. He said:

The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*.<sup>2</sup>

The bourgeois-democratic republic was also a form of bourgeois state. A democratic republic was the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital had gained control of this very best shell, it established its power so securely, so firmly, that "no change, either of persons, of institutions, or of parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic, can shake it".<sup>3</sup>

Lenin criticized Kautsky's argument about "the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament". He said, "This is nothing but the purest and the most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in word."<sup>4</sup> Kautsky's view came

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

entirely within the concept of the bourgeois parliamentary republic. The real essence of bourgeois parliamentarianism was "to decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament".<sup>1</sup> On a later occasion Lenin pointed out:

Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must win the majority in elections carried out *under the yoke of the bourgeoisie*, under the yoke of wage-slavery, and that only after this must it win power. This is the height of folly or hypocrisy, is substituting voting, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution.<sup>2</sup>

In *The State and Revolution*, Lenin expounded on the theory of the inevitability of violent revolution developed by Marx and Engels, precisely because the opportunists usually did not "talk or even think about the significance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among the masses".<sup>3</sup> He said:

The latter [i.e. the bourgeois state] *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away," but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honour, and which fully corresponds to Marx's repeated declarations (recall the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> *Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> "The State and Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 218.



with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a violent revolution; recall what Marx wrote nearly thirty years later, in criticizing the Gotha Program of 1875, when he mercilessly castigated the opportunist character of that program) — this panegyric is by no means a mere “impulse,” a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of *all* the teachings of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their teaching by the now predominant social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends is expressed in striking relief by the neglect of *such* propaganda and agitation by both these trends.<sup>1</sup>

To cover up their own shameful servility to the bourgeois state and their fear of violent revolution, the Kautskyites when discussing the problem of the state merely talked about anti-anarchism but avoided the subject of anti-revisionism; in addition, they maliciously blurred the line of demarcation between Marxism and anarchism. In *The State and Revolution* Lenin made a clear demarcation between Marxism and anarchism, criticized the errors of anarchism, and at the same time smashed the ignominious attempt of the opportunists to slander the Marxists. He said:

. . . (1) the former [i.e., the Marxists], while aiming at the complete abolition of the state, recognize that this aim can only be achieved after classes have been abolished by the socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of Socialism, which leads to the withering away of the state; the latter [i.e., the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.

anarchists] want to abolish the state completely overnight, failing to understand the conditions under which the state can be abolished. (2) The former recognize that after the proletariat has conquered political power it must utterly destroy the old state machine and substitute for it a new one consisting of an organization of the armed workers, after the type of the Commune; the latter, while insisting on the destruction of the state machine, have absolutely no clear idea of *what* the proletariat will put in its place and *how* it will use its revolutionary power; the anarchists even deny that the revolutionary proletariat should use the state power, they deny its revolutionary dictatorship. (3) The former demand that the proletariat be prepared for revolution by utilizing the present state; the anarchists reject this.<sup>1</sup>

THE WORKING CLASS WOULD PREFER TO TAKE POWER  
PEACEFULLY BUT THE BOURGEOISIE WILL NEVER  
VOLUNTARILY RETIRE FROM THE STAGE  
OF HISTORY

The political situation in Russia after the February Revolution was characterized by the existence of a dual power. In other words, besides the bourgeois Provisional Government there was another government — the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. This situation could not last for ever. The course of events demanded that all state power should be in the exclusive possession of one or the other — either the Provisional Government or the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. These were the circumstances under which Lenin, in his "April Theses", put forward his plan for the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. With regard to the Provisional Government, Lenin's slogan was: "No support for the Provisional Government!" He said that the Bolsheviks should work hard to help the masses understand that the Soviet was the only possible form of revolutionary state power and that all state power should be turned over to the Soviets. Hence, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who supported the Provisional Government, should be expelled from the Soviets and the Bolsheviks made the majority party in order that the policy of the Soviets could be changed. Lenin drew this conclusion in anticipation of a peaceful development of the revolution. He arrived at it in conditions which were very rare in revolutionary history.

Lenin said:

... [at that time] the Soviets were composed of delegations from the mass of free (i.e., not subject to external coercion) and armed workers and soldiers. The *essence* of the situation was that the arms were in the hands of the people, and that no coercion was exercised over the people from without. That is what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the development of the revolution. The slogan, "All power to the Soviets," was a slogan for the next immediate step, which could be directly effected in this peaceful path of development.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"On Slogans", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 6, pp. 167-68.

Lenin had declared long before that the workers would prefer to take power peacefully. "But," he said, "to *renounce* the revolutionary seizure of power would be *madness* on the part of the proletariat, both from the theoretical and the practical-political points of view; it would mean nothing but a disgraceful retreat in face of the bourgeoisie and all other propertied classes. It is very probable — even most probable — that the bourgeoisie will not make peaceful concessions to the proletariat and at the decisive moment will resort to violence for the defence of its privileges."<sup>1</sup> Thus, while anticipating a peaceful development of the revolution, Lenin did not cease his revolutionary education and organization of the masses, nor did he fail to make actual preparations for non-peaceful revolution.

As was to be expected, the Provisional Government, which included the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, made no peaceful concessions to the proletariat. On July 4, it suppressed a peaceful mass demonstration with great violence. It took all state power into its own hands and virtually ended the dual power.

Although the Bolsheviks had tried to restrain the demonstrations which took place and were suppressed on July 4, Lenin, unlike the opportunists, did not rebuke the revolutionary masses. He wrote:

Had our party refused to support the July 16-17 [July 3-4] movement, which burst out spontaneously despite our attempts to restrain it, it would have been a direct and complete betrayal of the proletariat, since

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<sup>1</sup>"A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 276.

the masses came into motion because of their well-founded and just indignation. . . .<sup>1</sup>

He added:

The real error of our party on July 16-17, as now revealed by events, was only that the party considered the national situation *less* revolutionary than it proved to be, that the party *still* considered possible a peaceful development of political transformations through a change in the policies of the Soviets, whereas in reality the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s had already so much entangled and bound themselves by agreements with the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie had become so counter-revolutionary, that there could no longer be any idea of peaceful development.<sup>2</sup>

The July events showed that a peaceful development of the revolution was no longer possible. On this point Lenin wrote as follows:

That [i.e., the peaceful development of the revolution] would have been the most easy, the most advantageous course for the people. Such a course would have been the least painful, and it was therefore necessary to fight for it most energetically. Now, however, this struggle, the struggle for the timely transfer of power to the Soviets, has ended. A peaceful course of development has been rendered impossible.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Draft Resolution on the Political Situation", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXI, Book I, pp. 158-59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> "On Slogans", *op. cit.*, p. 169.

Under his guidance, a policy of armed insurrection was decided upon at the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party.

For a few days in September the peaceful development of the revolution again became possible. At that time the people's armed forces led by the Bolsheviks had routed Kornilov's rebellion. The Soviets had begun to shift over to the Bolsheviks. The bourgeois Provisional Government was facing a crisis. In the article "Compromises", Lenin said that if the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries would agree to form a government responsible solely and exclusively to the Soviets, if the Bolsheviks had full freedom of propaganda, and if the members of the Soviets could be re-elected for the immediate realization of a new type of democracy, the Bolsheviks would take all power into their own hands and the revolution would develop peacefully. But this possibility vanished very quickly. The Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Constitutional-Democrats arrived at an agreement behind the scenes, and helped the landlords and capitalists to consolidate their rule. Three days after Lenin wrote the article "Compromises" he added in an appended note that "the days when by chance the road of peaceful development became possible have already passed"<sup>1</sup> and that his article had become nothing but "belated thoughts".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin said:

Imperialism — the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly

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<sup>1</sup> "Compromises", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 6, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*

capitalism — has demonstrated with particular force an extraordinary strengthening of the "state machine" and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.<sup>1</sup>

In such an era it was all the more necessary for the proletariat to overthrow bourgeois rule and destroy its state machine.

THOSE WHO REFUSE TO UNDERTAKE ARMED INSURRECTION WHEN THE DECISIVE BATTLE HAS TO BE FOUGHT ARE "MISERABLE TRAITORS TO THE PROLETARIAN CAUSE"

Lenin pointed out that before the decisive battle was fought the political party of the working class should not abandon any possible open work, including parliamentary struggle. But "we should have devoted to this talk-shop one hundredth of our strength, and given 99 per cent to the *masses*".<sup>2</sup> "Do not miss a single hour of open work. But do not cherish any constitutional and 'peaceful' illusions."<sup>3</sup> Whoever refused to undertake armed uprising when the decisive battle had to be fought "would be *miserable traitors* to the proletarian cause".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The State and Revolution", *op. cit.*, pp. 231-32.

<sup>2</sup> "Concerning the Heroes of Forgery and the Errors of the Bolsheviks", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 26, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> "The Political Situation", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXI, Book I, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> "The Crisis Has Matured", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 6, p. 229.

Just at the time when it was certain that armed insurrection would become a political reality in Russia the opportunists maliciously slandered Lenin and the Bolsheviks as being advocates of Blanquism. Lenin gave the lie to this slander. He said:

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon the revolutionary spirit of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon the *crucial moment* in the history of the growing revolution, when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemies and in the ranks of the *weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three factors in the attitude towards insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*.<sup>1</sup>

On the question of the right moment for the insurrection, Lenin said in "The Crisis Has Matured", "The beginning of October (end of September) undoubtedly marked a definite turning point in the history of the Russian revolution and, to all appearances, of the world revolution also."<sup>2</sup> The tendency, or views, of those who were "opposed to the immediate seizure of power and an immediate insurrection"<sup>3</sup> had to be overcome for "otherwise the Bolsheviks will cover themselves with

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<sup>1</sup> "Marxism and Insurrection", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 6, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 6, p. 224.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.



*eternal shame and destroy themselves as a party*".<sup>1</sup> Obstruction by Kamenev and Zinoviev caused the insurrection to be postponed over and over again. Lenin conducted a bitter struggle against them in order to stage an early insurrection. From late September (old Russian calendar) up to the eve of the October Revolution he incessantly called for immediate insurrection. He repeatedly warned that to postpone the insurrection would be "a crime", that it would "truly mean death" and that it would "*doom the revolution to failure*".<sup>2</sup> Thanks to Lenin's persistent, indefatigable struggle the armed insurrection eventually resulted in victory on October 25 (November 7).

As a result of the theoretical and political struggles that had been waged, the clouds of revisionism and opportunism which had darkened the road of revolution were dispersed and the brilliant light of Leninism finally illuminated the way forward for the struggle of the proletariat in Russia and the whole world. Under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the proletariat and the working people of Russia launched their armed insurrection, overthrew the state power of the bourgeoisie, accomplished the great October Revolution and established the first socialist country in the world, thus opening a new era in the history of mankind. Basically, the road of the October Revolution is the glorious road of all human progress.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.





#### 14. THE EFFORT WHICH WAS MADE THROUGH STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

##### GAINING A RESPITE TO CONSOLIDATE SOVIET POWER

After the victory of the October Revolution the Bolsheviks carried out a tense and arduous struggle to consolidate the Soviet power. Internally, the old state machine had to be destroyed, the landlord and capitalist system of private ownership had to be abolished, and the resistance offered by the exploiting classes suppressed. Externally, the war had to be brought to an immediate end and peace established.

On November 8, the day after the victory of the revolution, the Second All-Russian Congress of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, presided over by Lenin, adopted the Decree on Land, which proclaimed the abolition without compensation of private landownership and announced that all land reverted to the state, to be distributed to the working people for their use. The congress also adopted the Decree on Peace which called upon the peoples and governments of all the belligerent nations to start immediately negotiations for a just and democratic peace, in order to bring about peace without territorial concessions or indemnities. The Decree stated:

The government considers that it would be the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war for the purpose of dividing up among the strong and rich nations the feeble nationalities seized by them, and solemnly declares its determination to sign immediately conditions of peace terminating this war on the conditions indicated, which are equally just for all peoples without exception.<sup>1</sup>

Appealing to the proletariat of all countries, especially to the class-conscious workers of Britain, France and Germany, the Decree said:

... the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now lies upon them of emancipating mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences. For these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely energetic action, can help us to bring to a successful conclusion the cause of peace, and at the same time the cause of the emancipation of the toiling and exploited masses of the population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.<sup>2</sup>

In explaining this Decree, Lenin pointed out the necessity to help the peoples to interfere in the question of war and peace. He strongly believed that "the workers' movement will triumph and will lay the path to peace and to socialism".<sup>3</sup>

After the promulgation of the Decree on Peace, Lenin said:

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<sup>1</sup> "The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 6, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 403.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 405.

... now the struggle for peace has begun. This struggle is a hard one. Whoever thought that peace could be achieved easily, that one need only hint at peace and the bourgeoisie would present it to us on a platter, is a completely naive person. Whoever ascribed this view to the Bolsheviks was practising deception. The capitalists have locked themselves in a life-and-death struggle, in order to divide the booty. It is clear: to destroy war — means to defeat capital, and in this sense the Soviet power has begun the struggle.<sup>1</sup>

He also said, "We have never promised that war could be ended at one stroke, by sticking the bayonets into the ground."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet government's peace proposal was rejected by Britain, France and the U.S.A. The Soviet government therefore decided to start negotiations with Germany and Austria. They began in December 1917 at Brest-Litovsk. The German government put forward harsh terms in the negotiations, demanding territorial concessions and the payment of an indemnity. By that time the old army had collapsed and could not continue fighting. The work of creating a socialist workers' and peasants' army which was really dependable and ideologically strong was still in its early stages. The shortage of grain was worse than it had ever been before. Utterly worn out and in extreme distress, the people were very anxious to end the war and no other country had yet risen in revolution. Lenin con-

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<sup>1</sup> "Speech at the First All-Russian Naval Congress", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 26, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> "Speech at the Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies Jointly with the Representatives of the Front", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 26, p. 260.

sidered that in these circumstances the continuation of the war would give the imperialists a chance to destroy the new-born Soviet Republic. He therefore favoured the immediate signing of a peace treaty. The Russian workers and peasants had to accept the harsh terms of peace and retreat before the German imperialists, the most dangerous marauders at the time, in order to gain a respite in which to create a new army, the Red Army, able to defend their Soviet fatherland and resist imperialist aggression. But Bukharin, Trotsky and others opposed Lenin's policy. They stood for the continuation of the war, or for a policy of "neither war nor peace". When Germany announced its ultimatum, Trotsky, the chairman of the Soviet delegation, refused to sign the peace treaty. At the same time he declared that the Soviet Republic would continue to demobilize the army and would not fight. Thereupon, on February 18, 1918, the German troops began attacking along the whole front, seizing enormous stretches of Soviet territory and threatening Petrograd. Lenin sounded the alarm, "The socialist fatherland is in danger!" He called on the people to defend their Soviet homeland, to speed the formation of the people's armed forces and to resist the German offensive. The new-born revolutionary army offered heroic resistance to the German marauders who were armed to the teeth. Meanwhile, Lenin combated Bukharin and Trotsky and succeeded in persuading the majority of the Party's Central Committee to send a telegram in the name of the People's Commissariat notifying the German government of their willingness to sign the peace treaty in accordance with the terms put forward at Brest-Litovsk. The German government then put forward even harsher terms, demanding still greater territorial con-

cessions. The Soviet government could not but accept the humiliating terms, and on March 3, 1918 peace was concluded.

Lenin criticized the bombastic talk of the "Leftists" about waging a revolutionary war at once, and he explained the realistic significance of consolidating Soviet power by concluding peace.

He pointed out that the high-sounding talk of the "Left Communists" like Bukharin and Radek was smart and attractive but had no basis whatever. Further military attacks by the imperialist states on the Soviet Republic were inevitable. But taking the balance of forces and the material factors into account, the continuation of the war would stake the fate of Soviet power on a single adventure. The British and French imperialists as well as the Russian bourgeoisie were hoping that Soviet Russia would continue fighting so that Soviet power might collapse. To continue the war would have been to walk straight into the imperialists' net; it would have doomed the socialist revolution.

Lenin said that in concluding the peace treaty at Brest-Litovsk,

*... we free ourselves as much as is possible at the present moment from both hostile imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare which hamper concerted action on their part against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution.*<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet power signed the peace, "not in order to 'capitulate' before imperialism, but in order to learn and

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<sup>1</sup>"On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 1, pp. 392-93.



prepare to battle against it in a serious and businesslike way".<sup>1</sup> He repeatedly stressed the absolute necessity of preparing for revolutionary war, of building up a regular, popular and powerful army, and of conserving strength persistently and patiently in order to prepare for a comeback. "To the work of organization, organization and organization! The future, despite all ordeals, is ours," he said.<sup>2</sup>

Later events confirmed Lenin's statements. With the conclusion of peace Soviet power gained a respite in which to organize the Red Army, to begin to establish socialist order in the economic life of the country, and to pave the way for the defeat of armed intervention by foreign states and the counter-revolutionary rebellions within the country.

The signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty by the Bolsheviks was a compromise, but it was a compromise favourable to the revolution. By this compromise they "sacrificed subsidiary interests and preserved the fundamental interests".<sup>3</sup> It was absolutely correct.

In order that the opportunists should have no room for malicious misinterpretation, Lenin used many similes to show the fundamental difference between the two kinds of compromise. He said:

Workers who lose a strike and sign terms for the resumption of work which are unfavourable to them and favourable to the capitalists, do not betray Social-

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<sup>1</sup> "An Onerous, but Necessary Lesson", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> "An Unhappy Peace", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Nuclei Secretaries of the Moscow Organization of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 8, p. 281.

ism. Only those betray Socialism who secure advantages for a section of the workers in exchange for advantages to the capitalists; only such agreements are impermissible in principle.<sup>1</sup>

He said again:

One must learn to distinguish between a man who gave the bandits money and firearms in order to lessen the damage they can do and facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives bandits money and firearms in order to share in the loot.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin made clear the indisputable historical fact that the Bolshevik Party always adhered to the revolutionary line. He pointed out that it "yielded to the violence of the Brest-Litovsk robbers only after the Anglo-French imperialists had frustrated the conclusion of a peace, and after the Bolsheviks had done everything humanly possible to hasten the revolution in Germany and other countries". He added that "such a compromise, entered into by such a party in such a situation, was absolutely correct".<sup>3</sup> At the same time he exposed the shameful history of the opportunist leaders of the Second International, and of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries of Russia, in their practice of treachery and apostasy. He said that "from beginning to end, *their* compromise with the bandits of imperialism lay in the fact that they made themselves *accomplices* in imperialist banditry".<sup>4</sup> Lenin

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<sup>1</sup>"On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", *op. cit.*, p. 388.

<sup>2</sup>"'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 360.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 360-61.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 361.

said that Marxists must be able to distinguish between compromises beneficial to the revolution, and treacherous compromises, and to know when compromises are admissible and when they are not.

Nevertheless, opportunists of all brands use the Brest-Litovsk peace as a pretext for making treacherous compromises. They say that if it was permissible for the Bolsheviks to compromise, it is permissible for them to compromise too. They try to depict Lenin as a man who would agree to compromise in any circumstances. These highly dishonourable efforts of theirs are quite futile.

#### THERE ARE NO OBSTACLES ON OUR SIDE TO PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

The respite gained by the Soviet state as a result of the Brest-Litovsk peace was very brief. In the first half of 1918 the armed interventionists of foreign states, in alliance with the counter-revolutionary forces within Russia, began a war against the Soviet state. The Bolsheviks led the people in a heroic struggle for more than two years. By the end of 1920 they finally smashed the main forces of the foreign armed interventionists and the Russian counter-revolutionaries. The Soviet state then entered an era of peaceful construction. The facts proved that the Bolsheviks not only made good use of the Brest-Litovsk peace to gain a respite, but had enough courage to take up arms and wage a revolutionary war against the foreign armed intervention. During the complex and tortuous struggle against the capitalist countries Lenin explained how a socialist state should correctly handle its relations with capitalist countries.

Lenin repeatedly declared that the socialist state was willing to co-exist peacefully with all nations and devote its energies to building up its own country. During the period of foreign armed intervention the Soviet government many times proposed armistice negotiations and declared that it would persist in its policy of struggling for peace. However, the foreign armed interventionists always obstructed the realization of peace. In answering the questions of an American reporter, Lenin said: "Let the U.S. capitalists refrain from touching us. We won't touch them."<sup>1</sup> With regard to the obstacle to peaceful co-existence Lenin said, "From our side, there is none. From the side of the American (and all the other) capitalists, it is imperialism."<sup>2</sup>

The land of socialism was willing to have normal trade relations with the capitalist countries. In replying to questions put by British and American correspondents, Lenin expressed willingness to develop trade with such capitalist countries as Britain, France and the U.S.A. In April 1922 Britain and France sponsored an international economic conference in Genoa and the Soviet government sent a delegation. Lenin said, "We are going to Genoa with the practical object of expanding trade and of creating conditions under which it could successfully develop on the widest scale."<sup>3</sup> In the Draft Resolution

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<sup>1</sup> "Reply to Questions by the Correspondent of the American Newspaper *New York Evening Journal*", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 30, p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "Political Report of the Central Committee to the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 9, p. 325.

of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on the Report of the Delegation to the Genoa Conference, Lenin said:

The delegation of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has correctly fulfilled its tasks in defending the complete sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic—having fought against attempts at enslavement and the restoration of private property, and having concluded a treaty with Germany.<sup>1</sup>

In certain conditions and at certain times it is possible for a socialist country to reach certain kinds of peaceful agreements with the capitalist countries, though the agreements have to be reached through struggle. Lenin said, "That is always the case: when you beat the enemy he wants to come to terms."<sup>2</sup> This was precisely what happened. After receiving a severe beating from the Soviet people the foreign armed interventionists had to call off their armed intervention for the time being. After a time they gradually, one after another, established trade and diplomatic relations with the Soviet state. However, this was also due to the support given by the people's revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries and by the national-liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries. Lenin said:

The opposition to the war on Soviet Russia has greatly gained in strength in all capitalist countries;

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<sup>1</sup> "Draft Resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on the Report of the Delegation to the Genoa Conference", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 33, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> "Speech Delivered at the First All-Russian Conference on Work in the Rural Districts", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 8, p. 192.

it is adding fuel to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and extending to very wide sections of the petty-bourgeois democracy. The conflict of interests between the various imperialist countries has become acute, and is growing more acute every day. The revolutionary movement among the hundreds of millions of oppressed peoples of the East is growing with remarkable vigour. The result of all these conditions is that international imperialism has proved itself unable to strangle Soviet Russia, although it is far stronger than she is, and has been obliged for the time being to grant her recognition, or semi-recognition, and to conclude trade agreements with her.

The result is a state of equilibrium which, although extremely unstable and uncertain, enables the Socialist Republic to exist — not for long, of course — within the capitalist encirclement.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE ONLY ROAD TO LASTING WORLD PEACE

While struggling for peaceful co-existence Lenin never entertained any illusion with regard to imperialism. He repeatedly said by way of admonition that by its nature imperialism could not tolerate co-existence with the socialist system for a long time and that the socialist state should always guard against any conflict the imperialists might provoke to destroy peace. Before the foreign armed intervention began he declared:

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<sup>1</sup> "Theses of Report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party to the Third Congress of the Communist International (Preliminary Draft)" (June 13, 1921), *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 32, p. 429.

International imperialism, with its mighty capital, its highly organised military technique, which is a real force, a real fortress of international capital, could not under any circumstances, on any condition, live side by side with the Soviet Republic because of its objective position and because of the economic interests of the capitalist class which are embodied in it — it could not because of commercial connections and international financial relations. In this sphere a conflict is inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

After foreign armed intervention began Lenin said:

... the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable.<sup>2</sup>

It was on account of this that Lenin repeatedly emphasized, "But the measures we take for peace must be accompanied by most intense military preparations, and in no case must our army be disarmed."<sup>3</sup> He said that it was necessary to "guard the defence capability of our

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<sup>1</sup> "War and Peace, Report Delivered to the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) March 7, 1918", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> "Report of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) at the Eighth Party Congress, March 18, 1919", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 8, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> "Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 328.

country and our Red Army as the apple of your eye".<sup>1</sup> Lenin taught that we must not lightly believe the bourgeoisie's promises of "peace". Even if capitalist countries reach agreement with the socialist country they will tear that agreement to pieces whenever it suits their purpose. He said, "You know what treaties and laws are worth when an international conflict flares up. They are nothing but scraps of paper."<sup>2</sup> He said further:

. . . and the first commandment of our policy, the first lesson flowing from our governmental work during the year, the lesson that all workers and peasants must learn is — to be on the alert, to remember that we are surrounded by people, classes and governments which openly express the greatest hatred for us. It is necessary to remember that we are always a hair's breadth from invasion of some kind. We will do everything in our power to prevent such a disaster.<sup>3</sup>

To gain lasting world peace capitalism-imperialism must be eliminated. Lenin said:

. . . without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international courts of arbitration, no talk about reducing armaments, no "democratic" reorganisation of the League of Nations will save mankind from new imperialist wars.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Report on the Internal and External Policy of the Republic at the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 33, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> "The Soviet Foreign Policy", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXIII, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> "Report on the Internal and External Policy of the Republic at the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets", *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, pp. 202-03.



The only path is to "throw off the yoke of capitalism by revolutionary means, eliminate the domination of the bourgeoisie and win a socialist society and lasting peace".<sup>1</sup>

To eliminate capitalism-imperialism one must not, like the opportunists, be as timid as a mouse, fearing and yielding to the violence of capitalism-imperialism; one must dare to struggle, to make revolution, and to win victory. That was what Lenin did. In his work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* Lenin formulated the scientific thesis that imperialism is monopolistic, decaying and moribund capitalism. Basing himself on historical materialism and the Russian proletariat's experience in revolutionary struggle, he firmly believed that it was possible to defeat imperialism, which was seemingly strong. He compared imperialism to "a colossus with feet of clay", "a bugbear" and "a decrepit, dying, hopelessly sick old man". In his speech "Two Years of Soviet Rule" Lenin said:

It seemed at that time [two years ago] that world imperialism was such a tremendous and invincible force that it was stupid of the workers of a backward country to attempt an uprising against it. Now, however, as we glance back over the past two years, we see that even our opponents are increasingly admitting that we were right. We see that imperialism, which seemed such an insuperable colossus, has proved before the whole world to be a colossus with feet of clay . . . that all these seemingly huge and invincible forces of international imperialism are unreliable, and

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<sup>1</sup> "For Bread and Peace", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 26, p. 350.

hold no terrors for us, that at the core they are rotten, that they are making us stronger and stronger, and that this added strength will enable us to win victory on the outer front and to make it a thorough-going one.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 30, p. 106

## 15. UPHOLDING THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND CLASS STRUGGLE DURING THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION

### THE CHIEF CRITERION DISTINGUISHING THE MARXISTS FROM THE OPPORTUNISTS

The great October Revolution succeeded in establishing the first state of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the world, and it precipitated a revolutionary tide in various countries. In many of them proletarian revolution became the order of the day. Lenin declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat, the substance of proletarian revolution, had become the essential problem in the entire class struggle waged by the proletariat. The attitude towards the dictatorship of the proletariat had become the chief criterion distinguishing the Marxists from the opportunists.

The opportunists of the Second International vied with one another in attacking the Bolsheviks and the Soviet state. The "learned" Kautsky, versed in the art of sophistry, wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* in which he tried all he could to distort Marx's teachings on the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat, changing them into vulgar and liberal theories acceptable to the bourgeoisie. In defining the "dictatorship of the proletariat" he tried his utmost to

conceal its basic feature, i.e., revolutionary violence. He ranted about the possibility of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat in "democracy in general" or "pure democracy" through "peaceful" and "democratic" elections. He blamed the Bolsheviks for using violence and accused the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia of "having not the slightest reason" for "encroaching on democracy", for "suppressing democracy". In substance all this nonsense of Kautsky's amounted to using bourgeois democracy, i.e., bourgeois dictatorship, against the dictatorship of the proletariat. In several works Lenin comprehensively and categorically refuted the erroneous views of Kautsky and other opportunists of the Second International with regard to the problem of the state and proletarian dictatorship, and vividly depicted their ugly and repulsive features. These works include the following: *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*; *"Democracy" and Dictatorship*; *Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Presented to the First Congress of the Communist International*; *The State*; *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*; *Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*; *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*; and *A Contribution to the History of the Question of Dictatorship*. Like his earlier work *The State and Revolution*, these writings represent an important development of Marx's teachings on the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat; they are an extremely valuable contribution to the theoretical treasure-house of the world proletariat.

KAUTSKY DISTORTS THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE  
PROLETARIAT CONCEPT, RULING OUT THE  
USE OF REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE

Kautsky made the absurd statement that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was merely a "little word" occasionally used by Marx in one of his letters. Lenin strongly denounced Kautsky for his ridiculous distortion of the truth. He quoted the following passage from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*:

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin pointed out that this famous statement of Marx's epitomized his entire revolutionary theory. The theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the quintessence of Marxism.

Lenin said that the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is political power won and maintained by the use of violence by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat means the destruction of bourgeois democracy and establishment of proletarian democracy. The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a new one. This new machine is, therefore, the state under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Kautsky concealed or ignored the class content of bourgeois democracy. He shamelessly harped on "pure

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", *Marx and Engels, Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, pp. 32-33.

democracy" and "democracy in general". He applied to the era of imperialism in the 20th century the hypothesis, which Marx made in the 1870s, that Britain and the United States could become socialist through peaceful transition. He talked freely of a peaceful transition, i.e., "by democratic means". He falsely declared that the Paris Commune was established through voting by all the people, i.e., "democratically". Kautsky and other revisionists "taught" the people that the proletariat should first win a majority by universal suffrage, then obtain state power by a majority ballot, and finally organize socialism on the basis of "consistent" or "pure" democracy.

Lenin hit the nail on the head in exposing the real nature of bourgeois democracy. He said that there would never be "pure" democracy and that, so long as classes existed, there could only be class democracy. He declared:

Bourgeois democracy . . . nevertheless remains and under capitalism cannot but remain restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and a deception for the exploited, for the poor.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all the pleasing expressions it uses, such as "liberty" and "equality", the constitution of the bourgeoisie is, in the final analysis, a protection for the bourgeoisie's system of private ownership. Lenin said:

. . . and everyone of you who has read Marx — I think even everyone who has read one popularization of Marx — knows that Marx had devoted the greater part of his life and his literary works, and the greater

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<sup>1</sup>"The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 130.

part of his scientific research precisely to ridiculing liberty, equality, the will of the majority and the Benthamites of all kinds who depicted these things, and to proving that underlying these phrases were the interests of the liberty of the commodity-owner, the liberty of capital which it uses to oppress the toiling masses.<sup>1</sup>

He also stated:

There is not a single state, however democratic, which does not contain loopholes or limiting clauses in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a "disturbance of the peace," i.e., in case the exploited class "disturbs" its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner.<sup>2</sup>

He further said:

The bourgeois parliament, however democratic and in however democratic a republic — is nothing but a machine for the suppression of millions of working people by a handful of exploiters — if the property and power of the capitalists is preserved.<sup>3</sup>

Kautsky's method of falsifying the history of the Paris Commune was clumsy and ludicrous. Lenin pointed out

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<sup>1</sup> "Speech on the Deception of the People by the Slogans of Liberty and Equality, First All-Russian Congress on Adult Education", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 29, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> "Letter to the Workers of Europe and America", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXIII, p. 521.

that the flower of the bourgeoisie, its General Staff, and its upper strata had fled from Paris to Versailles and mustered all their strength to oppose the Paris Commune. The struggle of the Commune against Versailles was nothing but the struggle of the French workers' government against the government of the bourgeoisie. Could this be called "universal suffrage" and "pure democracy"? It was futile for Kautsky to try and defend himself by resorting to Marx's hypothesis that Britain and the United States might become socialist through peaceful transition. Lenin said that a military clique and bureaucracy did not exist in Britain and the United States in the 1870s and that when Marx made the hypothesis he was taking these countries as exceptions to the law of revolutionary history. He wrote:

. . . pre-monopoly capitalism, which reached its zenith in the seventies of the nineteenth century, was, by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits (which were most typical in England and America) distinguished by its relative attachment to peace and freedom. Imperialism, *i.e.*, monopoly capitalism, which finally matured only in the twentieth century, is, by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, distinguished by the least attachment to peace and freedom, and by the greatest and universal development of militarism everywhere. To "fail to notice" this in discussing the extent to which a peaceful or violent revolution is typical or probable is to stoop to the position of a common or garden lackey of the bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, pp. 125-26.



To gain victory in the socialist revolution the proletariat must win over to its side the great majority of the people. But if the work of trying to win over the people were limited to or determined by efforts to gain the greatest number of votes under the rule of the bourgeoisie, as the Kautskys believed, that would be the height of folly and a deception of the workers. Lenin said:

The Socialists, the fighters for the liberation of the working people from exploitation, had to use the bourgeois parliaments as a platform, as one of their bases of propaganda, agitation and organisation, *as long as our struggle was confined within the framework of the bourgeois system*. But now that world history has placed on the order of the day the complete destruction of this system, the overthrow and suppression of the exploiters, and the transition from capitalism to socialism, to confine oneself to bourgeois parliamentarism and to bourgeois democracy, to paint it up as "democracy" in general, to gloss over its bourgeois character, and to forget that universal suffrage, as long as the capitalists retain their property, is only one of the weapons of the bourgeois state, is shamefully to betray the proletariat, desert to the side of its class enemy, the bourgeoisie, become a traitor and renegade.<sup>1</sup>

He further stated:

In order to win the majority of the population to its side the proletariat must, in the first place, overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize state power; secondly, it must

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<sup>1</sup>"Letter to the Workers of Europe and America", *op. cit.*, pp. 521-22.

introduce Soviet power and smash the old state apparatus to bits, whereby it immediately undermines the rule, prestige and influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the non-proletarian toiling masses. Thirdly, it must *entirely destroy* the influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the *majority* of the non-proletarian toiling masses by satisfying *their* economic needs *in a revolutionary way at the expense of the exploiters*.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast with bourgeois democracy, proletarian democracy grants real democracy only to the working people; no democracy is granted to the exploiters. To its proletariat and working people, the overwhelming majority of the population, Soviet Russia provided a freedom and democracy which no democratic bourgeois republic ever had or could ever hope to have. At the same time, it exercised dictatorship over the exploiters, ruthlessly suppressing their resistance. Kautsky did not approve of this. Pretending to be a textualist or an innocent child, Kautsky asked why should the rule of the proletariat assume, and necessarily assume, a form which was incompatible with democracy since the exploiters represented only a very small minority of the population and the toiling masses were an overwhelming majority.

Lenin replied that the exploiters always formed only a small minority of the population. This was indisputably true. Taking that as the starting point, if one argued in a Marxist way, one would take as the basis the relation between the exploited and the exploiters. There could

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<sup>1</sup> *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, pp. 25-26.

be no abstract talk about majority and minority, ignoring the class character of the state and of democracy. The reason why the proletariat wanted to have a dictatorship was "to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie;...to inspire the reactionaries with fear;...to maintain the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie; in order that the proletariat may forcibly suppress its enemies!"<sup>1</sup> The indispensable characteristic, the necessary condition, of the dictatorship of the proletariat was the forcible suppression of the exploiters as a class. Lenin said:

... to assume that in a revolution that is at all profound and serious the issue is decided simply by the relation between the majority and the minority is the acme of stupidity, the stupid prejudice of a common or garden liberal, the *deception of the masses*, concealing from them a well-established historical truth. This historical truth is that in every profound revolution, the *prolonged, stubborn, desperate* resistance of the exploiters, who for a number of years enjoy important practical advantages over the exploited, is the *rule*. Never, except in the sentimental phantasies of the sentimental simpleton Kautsky, will the exploiters submit to the decision of the exploited majority without making use of their advantages in a last desperate battle, or series of battles.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin pointed out that Kautsky's purpose in so distorting Marx's theory and indulging in sophistry was to rule out the use of revolutionary violence. He said:

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<sup>1</sup> "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

. . . Kautsky has in the most incredible manner distorted the concept "dictatorship of the proletariat," and has transformed Marx into a common or garden liberal, i.e., he himself has rolled down to the level of a liberal who utters banal phrases about "pure democracy," embellishes and glosses over the class content of *bourgeois* democracy, and, above all, is mortally afraid of the oppressed class resorting to *revolutionary violence*. By "interpreting" the concept "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" to mean that the oppressed class will not use revolutionary violence against their oppressors, Kautsky beat the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx. . . .<sup>1</sup>

FAILURE TO CARRY ON THE CLASS STRUGGLE  
TO THE END PRESENTS THE DANGER OF  
THE RESTORATION OF BOURGEOIS RULE

The Russian proletariat's destruction of the state machine with revolutionary violence and its establishment of Soviet power under the dictatorship of the proletariat was a great victory of world-wide historic significance. It was necessary for the proletariat, after establishing its state power, to carry the class struggle forward to the end. Lenin said:

. . . after capturing state power the proletariat does not thereby cease its class struggle, but continues it in a different form, and by other means. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the pro-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

letariat conducted with the aid of an instrument like state power. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In the early years of Soviet power the struggle against the exploiting classes was waged by means of intensive civil war. Aided by the foreign armed interventionists, the overthrown landlords and bourgeoisie engaged in armed rebellion. The kulaks hoarded their grain, hoping to kill Soviet power through starvation. Speculative activity was rampant in the cities and countryside. The bourgeois intellectuals working in the departments of Soviet power attempted sabotage from within by various means. At the same time the Soviet state was confronted with the serious task of gradually remoulding the small peasants and strengthening discipline within the ranks of the proletariat.

It was inevitable that for a long period after the revolution the exploiters would in fact have very great influence. They had money, movable property, organizational and administrative ability, military knowledge and a comparatively high level of education. They were closely connected with important technicians who led a bourgeois life and were imbued with bourgeois ideology. Sections of the small producers would follow them. In addition, they had very extensive international connections. Lenin said:

The transition from capitalism to communism represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters will inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* will be converted into *attempts* at restoration. And after their first

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<sup>1</sup> *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, op. cit., p. 32.

serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters — who had not expected their overthrow, who never believed it possible, who would not permit the thought of it — will throw themselves with tenfold energy, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of their lost “paradise,” on behalf of their families who had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the “common herd” is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to “common” work). . . .<sup>1</sup>

It was precisely for this reason that the dictatorship of the proletariat “presupposes the ruthlessly severe, swift and resolute use of force to crush the resistance of the exploiters, of the capitalists, landlords and their underlings. Whoever does not understand this is not a revolutionary, and must be removed from the post of leader or adviser of the proletariat.”<sup>2</sup>

Lenin warned that the danger of a capitalist restoration did not lie only in armed intervention by the imperialists from abroad and armed rebellion by the counter-revolutionaries at home, but also in the fact that they were trying to make Soviet power undergo “peaceful disintegration”. At the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Lenin said, “They want to turn peaceful economic development into the peaceful disintegration of Soviet power.”<sup>3</sup> At the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks),

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<sup>1</sup> “The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky”, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>2</sup> “Greetings to the Hungarian Workers”, *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> “Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)”, *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 336.

Lenin again pointed out that the enemy slandered the New Economic Policy of the Soviet government as "internal degeneration". He said, "It really is the class truth, bluntly and frankly uttered by the class enemy."<sup>1</sup> Lenin advised all concerned to be on the alert because the things the enemy talked about were possible. He repeatedly pointed out that after the economic expropriation of the exploiting classes there was the possibility of new exploiters emerging. He said:

Yes, by the fact that we have overthrown the landlords and the bourgeoisie, we have cleared the road for, but not built, the edifice of socialism. And on the soil cleansed of one generation there constantly appear in history new generations, if only the soil produces them, and it does produce any number of bourgeois. And as for those who regard the victory over the capitalists as the petty proprietors regard it — "they have snatched something; come on, give me some, too, and I'll make use of it" — isn't each one of these a source of a new generation of bourgeois?<sup>2</sup>

After the proletariat seizes state power the urgent tasks confronting it are: to set up strong and "symmetrical organization" to manage the production and distribution of goods, and to wage ruthless struggle against disorder, trouble-making and sabotage. These tasks depend on dictatorship for their fulfilment. The dictatorship is

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<sup>1</sup> "Political Report of the Central Committee to the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 9, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> "Report on the Current Tasks of the Soviet Power, Session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, pp. 267-68.

necessary for "two main reasons or along two main channels": the suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, and the suppression of all elements of disintegration. Lenin said that the elements of disintegration of the old society were very numerous and they could not "reveal themselves" in periods of profound change "otherwise than in the increase of crime: hooliganism, corruption, profiteering and outrages of every kind. We must have time and *an iron hand* to put these down".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin said that the misfortune of previous revolutions had been that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses in suppressing the elements of disintegration did not last long. The social reason for this was the weakness of the proletariat which prevented it from winning over to its side the majority of the toilers and exploited and retaining power sufficiently long to enable it utterly to suppress all the exploiters as well as all the elements of disintegration. Lenin added:

It was this historical experience of all revolutions, it was this world-historical — economic and political — lesson that Marx confirmed in giving his short, sharp, concise and striking formula: dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin emphasized that the dictatorship should be like iron and not jelly. He said, "Dictatorship is iron rule, government that is revolutionarily bold, quick and ruthless in suppressing the exploiters as well as hooligans."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.



The remoulding of the small commodity producers is another important task of the proletariat when it has state power in its hands. Lenin said that the broad masses of small commodity producers are on the one hand working people and on the other small owners. Small production generates capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale. The small producers "encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternate moods of exaltation and dejection".<sup>1</sup> By their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive, demoralizing activity, they "achieve the *very* results which the bourgeoisie need and which tend to restore the bourgeoisie".<sup>2</sup> He also said:

The abolition of classes means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists . . . it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers*, and they *cannot be driven out*, or crushed; we *must live in harmony* with them; they can (and must) be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organizational work.<sup>3</sup>

If this were done it would be possible for the peasants and small producers to go forward onto the path of socialism.

The petty-bourgeois elements attacked the proletariat from within the Soviet state; they took advantage of every

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<sup>1</sup> " 'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 367.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

factor of disintegration, of every weakness, in order to bribe, and to increase indiscipline, laxity and chaos. There were many weak and vacillating elements who, unable to resist the lure of speculation, bribery and personal advantage, unscrupulously sought personal benefit at the expense of the collective interest. This obstructed the Soviet state in its efforts to overcome economic difficulties. Lenin considered that those who broke proletarian discipline should be severely punished. He strongly denounced the absurd view that the enforcement of labour discipline was a step backwards, and he called on the working people to strengthen their sense of organization and observe labour discipline. He said that the dictatorship of the proletariat certainly did not mean simply the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and landlords but "is the securing of order, discipline, productivity of labour, accounting and control by the proletarian Soviet power which is stronger and firmer than the previous power".<sup>1</sup> It was necessary to train and educate the working masses in the communist spirit, help them to discard old habits and customs handed down from the old system, as well as the habits and customs of private ownership, which were deep-rooted among the masses. Great difficulties would be encountered in this kind of work — at times it might even suffer setbacks — but eventually it would succeed.

The aim of proletarian dictatorship was not only to suppress the exploiters and the elements making for disintegration but also to remould and educate the small commodity producers and strengthen labour discipline

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<sup>1</sup> "Report on the Current Tasks of the Soviet Power, Session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee", *op. cit.*, p. 267.

within the ranks of the proletariat. It was not only to overcome the resistance offered by the capitalists in the military and political realms but also to overcome the very strong and most far-reaching resistance offered by the capitalists in the realm of ideology. The forms of struggle were many. Lenin said:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle — bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative — against the forces and traditions of the old society.<sup>1</sup>

He pointed out that the class struggle in the transition period was a struggle between the two roads of capitalism and communism. He said:

Theoretically, there can be no doubt that between capitalism and communism there lies a definite transition period. It cannot but combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy. This transition period cannot but be a period of struggle between moribund capitalism and nascent communism — or, in other words, between capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed and communism which has been born but which is still very feeble.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the publication of *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin said, in a section added to *The State and Revolution*:

Opportunism *does not extend* the recognition of class struggle to what is the cardinal point, to the period of

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<sup>1</sup> "‘Left-Wing’ Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *op. cit.*, p. 367.

<sup>2</sup> *Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, pp. 5-6.

*transition* from capitalism to Communism, to the period of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup>

He further stated:

The essence of Marx's teaching on the state has been mastered only by those who understand that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from "classless society," from Communism.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## 16. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL ON THE BASIS OF THE SURGING REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

### THE HEROIC, RESOLUTE STRUGGLE OF THE PROLETARIAT AND THE SHAMELESS BETRAYAL BY THE OPPORTUNISTS

The imperialist First World War sharpened the contradictions inherent in capitalism to an extent never known before. The war piled up fabulous riches for the monopoly capitalists while throwing tens of millions of toilers into the abyss of hunger and death. The anger that prevailed among the proletariat and working people towards the ruling classes became uncontrollable and revolutionary feeling reached new heights. At the same time, the October Revolution set an example of action, showing that socialist revolution was the only way to get rid of the imperialist war. Thus a situation of imminent revolution emerged in many European countries.

In January 1918, a general strike broke out in Vienna. This was followed by another in Berlin, involving half a million workers, and massive demonstrations took place in many parts of Germany. In October 1918, Czechoslovakia and Hungary declared their independence, bringing about the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In November, Poland declared its independence. From the end of October, Germany witnessed frequent uprisings in which workers and soldiers seized power in many

areas and formed Soviets. On November 9, workers and soldiers in Berlin took up arms and forced the Kaiser to abdicate. From the balcony of the palace building, Liebknecht addressed the armed workers and soldiers on parade, declaring the founding of the free German Socialist Republic. In March 1919, the Hungarian Communist Party and Social-Democratic Party jointly formed a government and proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Britain, France and Italy, too, great strikes broke out. As Lenin put it, "We see the dawn of the international socialist revolution of the proletariat breaking in a number of countries."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin lauded and supported the revolutionary action of the German and Hungarian proletariat, and he offered them timely advice. In his "Letter to the Workers of Europe and America" of January 1919, Lenin pointed out:

The whole course of development of the German revolution, and especially the struggle of the "Spartacists" — that is, of the genuine and only representatives of the proletariat — against the alliance of the traitorous swine, the Scheidemanns and Südekums, with the bourgeoisie, has clearly shown how the question in relation to Germany has been *put* by history: either "Soviet government" or a bourgeois parliament, whatever labels (such as a "National" or "Constituent" Assembly) it may bear.<sup>2</sup>

As soon as the Hungarian Soviet Republic was founded Lenin told the Hungarian Communists to watch out and

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<sup>1</sup> "Memorial to Marx and Engels", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXIII, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXIII, p. 521.

see if the Social-Democrats really accepted the dictatorship of the proletariat. In May 1919, in his "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers", Lenin gave a systematic account of the experience of the Russian proletariat in consolidating its own dictatorship. He said that the proletariat should persist in the class struggle against the resistance of the bourgeoisie and oppose the irresolution and vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie. He stressed that if vacillation should manifest itself among the Socialists, who had only now proclaimed their adherence to the dictatorship of the proletariat, a ruthless struggle would have to be waged against them.

In the surging tide of revolution, the revolutionary Left in a number of countries proved heroic and resolute in leading the masses in struggle. However, with their lack of experience and small forces, they failed to make a thorough exposure of the opportunists and break with them in time, as Lenin indicated they had to do, and thus they made it easier for the opportunists to carry on traitorous activity. The opportunists, who had never had any inclination for revolution, had been afraid of it and regarded it with hostility, now openly sided with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and became "labour-lieutenants of the capitalist class". They helped the bourgeoisie to strangle the mass revolutionary movement, and rescued it at moments of crisis.

In Germany, during the general strike of the Berlin workers in January 1918, the opportunists seized the leadership of the strike and helped the German government to suppress the movement. Not in the least ashamed of what they had done, Scheidemann boasted, "It was not to the credit of the 'rulers' at the time that the January revolution had not caused disaster. . . . We had

prevented the Russian order." After the November 1918 revolution, Ebert, Scheidemann, Hasse and other leaders of the Right and "Centre" groups of the German Social-Democratic Party formed a provisional government. Ebert declared, "I hate the revolution as I hate sin," and stated that he would rule Germany in accordance with the constitution of the imperial state. On the other hand, Scheidemann called for a transition to a republic, that is, the establishment of a bourgeois republic. On December 16, the First National Congress of the Soviets was convened in Berlin, and the Rights and "Centrists" had the majority. While the congress was in session, 250,000 Berlin workers demonstrated and demanded the overthrow of the Ebert government, "All power to the Soviets", and the proclamation of Germany as a socialist republic. Dominated by the opportunists, the congress rejected the demands of the masses, decided to turn over all power to the Ebert government, and agreed to convene a Constituent Assembly. In January 1919, Noske, the Social-Democratic minister of defence, ordered the suppression of the armed uprising of the Berlin workers. On January 15, the revolutionary leaders of the German proletariat, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were assassinated on the orders of Ebert and Noske. Thus the opportunists assumed the role of butchers and murderers of the proletarian leaders. After bloody suppression of the revolution of the workers, the Constituent Assembly was held and a bourgeois constitution was adopted. The revolution in Germany ended in failure.

In Hungary, under the pressure of the revolutionary masses the Right-wing Social-Democratic leaders accepted the programme of dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist revolution which the Communist Party put for-



ward. But following the armed intervention by the Allied imperialist powers, the Social-Democratic leaders did their utmost to cancel Soviet power, and they took an active part in the counter-revolutionary riots. Under the enemy attacks from within and from without, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was overthrown on August 1, 1919.

Lenin angrily denounced the criminal actions of the opportunists in betraying the revolution. He declared that their betrayal was one of the basic reasons why the revolution failed in Germany and Hungary and why the bourgeoisie was able to maintain power, or stage a comeback. In Germany the proletarian revolution was betrayed by the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, and a principal reason for the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic was betrayal by the Social-Democrats. Lenin urged every Communist never to forget the bitter lessons of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. He said, "The Hungarian proletariat had to pay dearly for the amalgamation of the Hungarian Communists with the reformists."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE NEW, REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONAL AND THE ROTTEN, YELLOW INTERNATIONAL

Earlier, on the eve of the revolutions in Germany and Hungary, Lenin had pointed out:

Europe's greatest misfortune and danger is that it has *no* revolutionary party. . . . Of course, the mighty revolutionary movement of the masses may rectify this

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<sup>1</sup> "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 201.

deficiency; but it is nevertheless a serious misfortune and a grave danger.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's prescience proved completely true. The betrayal of the revolution in various European countries by the renegades to the proletariat — this great disaster was an education for the proletariat everywhere. Marxist parties were organized in many countries on the foundations of the surging revolutionary movement. By the beginning of 1919, there were thirty-nine Communist Parties and Left-wing socialist organizations.

From the time of the outbreak of World War I, Lenin undertook a whole range of work aimed at uniting the revolutionary Left, organizing the Third International, and restoring and strengthening the solidarity of the proletariat on internationalist lines. His unrelenting struggle against the opportunism of the Second International, the victory of the October Revolution, the development of the revolutionary movement in various countries and the founding of the Communist Parties, all combined to lay the foundations for the birth of the Third, or Communist, International.

The First Congress of the Communist International took place in March 1919 in Moscow, with delegates from thirty countries attending. Lenin personally guided this meeting and made a report on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was a major item on the agenda of the congress. In this report he showed how the opportunists of the Second International defended bourgeois democracy. He said:

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<sup>1</sup> "Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XXIII, p. 238.

... the present defence of bourgeois democracy cloaked in speeches about "democracy in general" and the present howling and shouting against the dictatorship of the proletariat cloaked by cries about "dictatorship in general" are a downright betrayal of socialism, the practical desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie, the denial of the right of the proletariat to make its own, proletarian revolution. . . .<sup>1</sup>

He expounded the law of class struggle and said:

History teaches that not a single oppressed class has ever come into power, or could come into power, without passing through the period of dictatorship, i.e., the conquest of political power and the violent suppression of the desperate, furious and unscrupulous resistance which the exploiters always put up.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, he went on:

... the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only a fully legitimate means of overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but it is also absolutely necessary for the whole mass of toilers as the sole means of protection against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Lenin's thesis was accepted by the congress, which adopted a manifesto, and also a programme on the activities of the Communist International, calling on the proletariat of all countries to strive for proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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<sup>1</sup> "Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

The founding of the Third International, this international proletarian revolutionary organization of a new type, was of great historical significance. In his article, "The Third International and Its Place in History", Lenin said:

The First International (1864-72) laid the foundation of an international organization of the workers for the preparation of their revolutionary onslaught on capital. The Second International (1889-1914) was an international organization of the proletarian movement whose growth was in *breadth*, at the cost of a temporary fall in the revolutionary level, a temporary increase in the strength of opportunism, which in the end led to the disgraceful collapse of this International.

.....  
The Third International gathered the fruits of the work of the Second International, discarded its opportunist, social-chauvinist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois, dross and *has begun to realize* the dictatorship of the proletariat.

.....  
The epoch-making significance of the Third, Communist International lies in the fact that it has begun to put into practice Marx's cardinal slogan, the slogan which sums up the centuries of development of Socialism and the working-class movement, the slogan which is expressed in the concept: dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>1</sup>

While the revolutionaries closed their ranks, the traitors flocked together. In February 1919, the social-chauvinists, "Centrists" and social-pacifists held a con-

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 199-200.

ference in Berne in the attempt to revive the Second International which had collapsed during World War I. Attended by delegates from the twenty-six member parties of the Second International, the conference passed one resolution opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat in favour of bourgeois democracy, and another recognizing and supporting the League of Nations which was under the control of the imperialists. The majority of those present also favoured censuring the Bolshevik Party, and it was only out of fear of the masses of the workers that they did not put forward a formal resolution on this point.

In the book "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Lenin said:

. . . the defence of the robber "League of Nations," the defence of direct or indirect alliances with the bourgeoisie of one's own country against the revolutionary proletariat and the "Soviet" movement, and the defence of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism against "Soviet power" became the principal manifestations of those impermissible and treacherous compromises, the sum total of which constituted the opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary proletariat and its cause.<sup>1</sup>

Those who attended the Berne International represented precisely this kind of opportunism. Lenin described the Berne International as "yellow, treacherous and perfidious", and "*an organisation of the agents of international imperialism*".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> "The Tasks of the Third International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, pp. 41, 43.

ONLY PARTIES WHICH HAD BROKEN WITH  
THE OPPORTUNISTS COULD AFFILIATE TO  
THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

Led by Lenin, the Third International waged resolute struggle against the Second International. In various countries, the advanced sections of the proletariat one after the other broke with the Second International and gravitated towards the Third International. Within a year of its establishment, it had already become attractive to the careerist politicians and "fashionable". During 1919-20, the most influential parties of the Second International, such as the Socialist Party of France, the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain and the Socialist Party of America, hypocritically announced their withdrawal from the Second International and applied for affiliation to the Third International while in fact maintaining their old Second International positions and opposing the principles of the Third International. Lenin said that this demonstrated the fact that the opportunist Second International, that gang of renegades to the proletariat, had become utterly hopeless and had been routed, and the genuine proletarian, communist Third International had won decisive victory.

At the same time, Lenin stressed that opportunism was a protracted disease. He said:

The disease is a protracted one; the cure is even more protracted than optimists hoped it would be. Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working class movement is not proletarian Socialism, but bourgeois Socialism. Practice has shown that the active people in the working class

movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie, than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not have remained in power.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin also pointed out that some of the old leaders of the old parties of the Second International had applied for affiliation to the Third International in order to retain their role of agents and lieutenants of the bourgeoisie within the working-class movement, and this, he said, presented "a very serious, immediate danger to the success of the cause of emancipation of the proletariat".<sup>2</sup>

To overcome this major danger and carry through the struggle against opportunism to the end, Lenin drafted his well-known statement, "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International", which stipulated that parties desiring to affiliate to the Third International must fulfil, among others, the following conditions. They must:

Explain clearly to the masses the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat and recognize the dictatorship of the proletariat in deeds as well as in words;

Ruthlessly denounce the reformists, social-chauvinists, social-pacifists and "Centrists" of all kinds, and break with them completely and absolutely;

Combine legal with illegal work and conduct persistent propaganda and agitation among the armed forces and the masses of the workers and peasants;

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<sup>1</sup> "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 162.

Support every liberation movement in the colonies;  
Give the most vigorous support to all Soviet republics  
in their struggle against the forces of counter-revolution; and

Build the Party on the principle of democratic centralism and have iron discipline within the Party.

This document was adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International in July 1920.

The conditions for affiliation to the Communist International formulated by Lenin gave rise to widespread discussion in the Socialist Parties. Around this discussion a sharp inner-Party struggle developed between the Left-wing on the one hand and the "Centre" and Right-wing on the other. The Left-wing of the German Independent Social-Democratic Party accepted the conditions, and in December 1920 it amalgamated with the German Communist Party. At the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921, the Left-wing of the Socialist Parties in France, Switzerland and Italy broke with the "Centre" and Right-wing and organized Communist Parties.

The "Centrists" rejected the conditions of affiliation and, in February 1921, various "Centrist" groups including the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain and the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany held a conference in Vienna, and founded the "Vienna International". In words, this "International" criticized the Second International, but in fact it followed an opportunist line identical with that of the latter. It was therefore called the Two-and-a-Half International. In May 1923, it amalgamated with the Second International.

The birth of the Third International and the victory it won in the struggle against the Second and the Two-and-



a-Half International represented the victory of Marxism-Leninism over revisionism and opportunism. Lenin created the Third International, protected it from adulteration and safeguarded the genuine international solidarity of the Communist Parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. Under the leadership of Lenin, the Third International raised high the red flag of revolution, united the foremost proletarians of all countries and became the centre of leadership in the international communist movement.





## 17. CRITICISM OF THE "LEFT-WING" INFANTILE DISORDER IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

### THE TWO ERRONEOUS TRENDS IN THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

The guiding of the proletarian revolution to the road of victory demanded of every Communist Party that it should be like the Bolshevik Party, firm in principle, flexible in tactics, neither sinking into the mire of the Right opportunism and capitulationism of the Second International nor making the error of "Left" dogmatism and adventurism. And to serve this very need, in April 1920 Lenin wrote "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*.

In this work, Lenin summed up the experience of both the Russian and the international working-class movement. He pointed out that Bolshevism had grown up, had gained in strength, and had become steeled in long years of struggle against the internal enemies in the working-class movement. He spoke of Right opportunism as "the principal enemy of Bolshevism within the working-class movement". He added, "It remains the principal enemy internationally too. The Bolsheviks devoted, and continue to devote, most attention to this enemy."<sup>1</sup> The other enemy of Bolshevism within the

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<sup>1</sup> " 'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 353.

working-class movement was the "Left" trend, the petty-bourgeois revolutionism "which falls short, in anything essential, of the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle".<sup>1</sup> Lenin maintained:

The history of the working-class movement now shows that in all countries it is about to experience (and has already begun to experience) a struggle between Communism, which is growing, gaining strength and marching towards victory, and, first and foremost, its *own* (in each country) "Menshevism," i.e., opportunism and social-chauvinism, and, secondly — as a supplement so to say — "Left-wing" Communism.<sup>2</sup>

Of the "Left" error that existed at the time in the international communist movement, Lenin gave the following estimation:

. . . the mistake of Left doctrinairism in Communism is at present a thousand times less dangerous and less significant than the mistakes of Right doctrinairism (i.e., social-chauvinism and Kautskyism); but, after all, that is only due to the fact that Left Communism is a very young trend, is only just coming into being.<sup>3</sup>

The comrades who committed the "Left" error had communist revolutionary fervour. Lenin wrote:

This temper is highly gratifying and valuable; we must learn to value it and to support it, for without it, it would be hopeless to expect the victory of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, or in any other

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 432.

country for that matter. People who can give expression to this temper of the masses, who can rouse such a temper (which is very often dormant, unrealized and unaroused) among the masses, must be valued and every assistance must be given them. And at the same time we must openly and frankly tell them that temper *alone* is not enough to lead the masses in a great revolutionary struggle, and that such and such mistakes that very loyal adherents of the cause of the revolution are about to commit, or are committing, may damage the cause of the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

The Right and "Left" trends are both non-proletarian and anti-Marxist in nature. In given conditions, they complement each other or even change into one another. Lenin repeatedly stressed that the international communist movement must go on putting the major effort into fighting Right opportunism, while at the same time must oppose the "Left" error which had emerged in certain Communist Parties.

In "*Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Lenin trenchantly condemned the betrayal by the opportunists of the Second International, and thoroughly criticized the "Left" trend. He summed up the experience of the three Russian revolutions and the early days of the Soviet state, and the lessons of the failure of the revolutions in Germany and Hungary. He developed the theory of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and explained Marxist strategy and tactics. Again and again he showed how Communists should master the scientific theory and methods of struggle of proletarian revolution and exert their best efforts in leading

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 406.

millions of people to victory in the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the world.

#### THE COMBINATION OF UNIVERSAL LAWS AND NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Lenin described the sufferings of the Russian revolutionaries in their search for the truth, and recounted the many forms of struggle which the Bolsheviks used. He said:

Russia achieved Marxism, the only correct revolutionary theory, through veritable *suffering*, through half a century of unprecedented torment and sacrifice, of unprecedented revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, study, practical trial, disappointment, verification and comparison with European experience.<sup>1</sup>

Built on this theoretical foundation, Bolshevism passed through fifteen years (1903-17) of practical history. Through complicated struggles, "legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist",<sup>2</sup> the Bolsheviks mastered the revolutionary tactics of advance and retreat, offensive and defensive, and accumulated an unequalled wealth of experience. Lenin said:

. . . on certain very essential questions of the proletarian revolution, *all* countries will inevitably have to perform what Russia has performed.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

And certain fundamental features of the Russian revolution, he stated, possess "the international validity of the historical inevitability of a repetition on an international scale".<sup>1</sup> In that sense, the basic theory and tactics of the Bolsheviks are of international significance, and the road of the October Revolution reflects the universal laws of proletarian revolution in all countries. But, as Lenin pointed out:

This the "revolutionary" leaders of the Second International, such as Kautsky in Germany and Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler in Austria, failed to understand, and therefore proved to be reactionaries and advocates of the worst kind of opportunism and social treachery.<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly, in their application of the universal truth of Marxism and the laws of proletarian revolution as reflected by the October Revolution, the Communists in each country must combine these laws with the specific economic, political and cultural features of their own country. Anyone failing to do so would commit the mistake of dogmatism. Lenin said:

. . . the Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account both the main fundamental tasks of the struggle against opportunism and "Left" doctrinairism and the *specific features* which this struggle assumes and inevitably must assume in each separate country in conformity with the peculiar features of its economics, politics, culture, national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions, and so on and so forth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 419-20.



The unity of tactics of the international communist movement demands not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of national differences, but "such an application of the *fundamental* principles of Communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) as will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars*, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state differences".<sup>1</sup> Lenin wrote:

Investigate, study, seek, divine, grasp that which is peculiarly national, specifically national in the *concrete manner* in which each country approaches the fulfilment of the *single* international task, in which it approaches the victory over opportunism and "Left" doctrinairism within the working-class movement, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship — such is the main task of the historical period through which all the advanced countries (and not only the advanced countries) are now passing.<sup>2</sup>

THE LEADERS, THE PARTY, THE CLASS, THE MASSES  
AND PARTY DISCIPLINE

In the same book, "*Left-Wing*" Communism, an *Infantile Disorder*, Lenin elaborated on the relationship between the leaders, the Party, the class, the masses, and Party discipline, and criticized the wrong views of the "Left" Communists on these questions.

Sharp divergence between "leaders" and the masses was a particular striking phenomenon in all countries at

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<sup>1,2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420.

the end of and after the imperialist war. The betrayal of the proletarian revolutionary cause by the opportunist leaders roused indignation against them among the rank-and-file Party members and the working people. In the circumstances, some "Left" Communists posed the question: "Dictatorship of the Party *or* dictatorship of the class, dictatorship (Party) of the leaders, *or* dictatorship (Party) of the masses?"<sup>1</sup> because, lacking a historical-materialist approach, they did not understand the question of the relationship between leaders, the Party, the class and the masses. Lenin pointed out that it was inconceivable for the proletariat and its party to engage in revolutionary activity without leaders. The question was what kind of leaders they were to choose. He said:

To go so far in this connection as to contrast, *in general*, dictatorship of the masses to dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd and stupid. What is particularly curious is that actually, in place of the old leaders, who hold the common human views on ordinary matters, *new leaders* are put forth (under cover of the slogan: "Down with the leaders!") who talk unnatural stuff and nonsense.<sup>2</sup>

He stated:

Everyone knows that the masses are divided into classes; that the masses can be contrasted to classes only by contrasting the vast majority in general, regardless of division according to status in the social

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

system of production, to categories holding a definite status in the social system of production. . . .<sup>1</sup>

He added, “. . . the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat, organized in the Soviets; the proletariat is led by the Communist Party (Bolsheviks). . . .”<sup>2</sup> He also said that usually “classes are led by political parties” and that “political parties, as a general rule, are directed by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members, who are elected to the most responsible positions and are called leaders”.<sup>3</sup> A proletarian party had to learn how to link together the leaders and the class, the leaders and the masses, in one integral whole, or otherwise it would not deserve the name.

The muddled views of the “Left” Communists on the inter-relationship between the leaders, the Party, the class and the masses actually reflected their denial of Party principle and Party discipline. Lenin said that this was tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in the interests of the bourgeoisie. It was equivalent to the kind of petty-bourgeois diffuseness, instability, incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organized action, which, if indulged, would inevitably destroy every proletarian revolutionary movement.

In summing up the historical experience of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin took the view that absolute centralization and extremely strict proletarian discipline constituted

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 363-64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

one of the fundamental conditions for the Bolsheviks' victory over the bourgeoisie and their success. He wrote:

... the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unity of will.<sup>1</sup>

How is this discipline maintained, tested and reinforced? Lenin said:

First, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its perseverance, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, to merge with the broadest masses of the toilers—primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the nonproletarian* toiling masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses have been convinced *by their own experience* that they are correct.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin stressed:

Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all at-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

tempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end in phrasemongering and grimacing.<sup>1</sup>

IT IS NECESSARY TO MASTER ALL FORMS  
OF STRUGGLE

Analysing the situation in the international communist movement, Lenin held that the task coming up on the agenda for the Communist Parties was the organizing of vast battalions and the bringing into alignment of all the class forces of a given society so as to hasten the ripening of conditions for the decisive battle. What this required was that: (1) all the hostile class forces should become sufficiently entangled, sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, sufficiently weakened in a struggle beyond their strength; (2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements should sufficiently expose themselves in the eyes of the people; and (3) a mass sentiment in favour of the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie should have arisen and begun to gain vigour among the proletariat. Then the time for revolution would be ripe. And if the Communists chose the moment rightly, they would be assured of victory.

To this end Communists had to combine the strictest devotion to communism with the ability to make whatever practical compromises were necessary, to manoeuvre, to make agreements, zigzags, retreats and so on, in order to make the fullest use of the contradictions in the enemy's camp and accelerate its disintegration and col-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

lapse. They must be able to master all forms or facets of social activity without any exception, to move the masses into action to the fullest degree, and to be ready to pass from one form to another in the quickest and most unexpected manner. Lenin said:

Everyone will agree that an army which does not train itself to wield all arms, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses or may possess, behaves in an unwise or even in a criminal manner. But this applies to politics even more than it does to war. . . . Unless we master all means of warfare, we may suffer grave, often even decisive, defeat if changes beyond our control in the position of the other classes bring to the forefront forms of activity in which we are particularly weak.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin taught Communists that when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle do not yet exist, they must be able to champion the interests of the revolution in non-revolutionary bodies, and even in downright reactionary bodies, among people who are incapable of immediately appreciating the need for revolutionary methods of action, and to lead the masses forward to undertake the real, last, decisive, and great revolutionary struggle.

"Left" Communists held that Communists should not work in reactionary trade unions; they should leave them and create absolutely brand-new, immaculate "Workers' Unions" consisting only of Communists. Lenin regarded this as "ridiculous and childish nonsense" which

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 425.

clearly revealed the frivolous attitude of the "Left" Communists towards the question of influencing the masses. He pointed out that to refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions meant leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats, or the "workers who have become completely bourgeois". Lenin maintained:

If you want to help "the masses" and to win the sympathy and support of "the masses," you must not fear difficulties, you must not fear the pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution on the part of the "leaders" (who, being opportunists and social-chauvinists, are in most cases directly or indirectly connected with the bourgeoisie and the police), but must imperatively *work wherever the masses are to be found*. You must be capable of every sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently, precisely in those institutions, societies and associations — even the most ultra-reactionary — in which proletarian or semiproletarian masses are to be found.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the Communists working in the reactionary trade unions must enter into battle against the opportunists. Lenin said that the opportunists and labour-aristocrats had acquired a firm footing in the trade unions of the West European countries. These people were imperialist-minded and imperialist-bribed. The fight against them had to be carried to the point where all the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

incorrigible opportunist leaders were completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions. Political power could not be captured without carrying this fight to a certain stage.

The "Left" Communists said, "One must emphatically reject . . . all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle, which have become historically and politically obsolete. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Lenin's answer to that was: ". . . we must *not* regard what is obsolete *for us* as being obsolete *for the class*, as being obsolete *for the masses*." <sup>2</sup> This was an illustration of the fact that the "Left" Communists failed to judge and handle questions as the party of the class, the Party of the masses. Lenin said:

. . . participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle on the parliamentary rostrum is *obligatory* for the party of the revolutionary proletariat *precisely* for the purpose of educating the backward strata of *its own class*, precisely for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, downtrodden, ignorant rural *masses*. <sup>3</sup>

He added:

Criticism — the keenest, most ruthless and uncompromising criticism — must be directed, not against parliamentarism or parliamentary activities, but against those leaders who are unable — and still more against those who are *unwilling* — to utilize parliamentary

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Lenin in "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *ibid.*, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup>"Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder", *ibid.*, p. 382.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 383.



elections and the parliamentary tribune in a revolutionary, communist manner.<sup>1</sup>

Refusal to participate in parliament was childish; it was a simple, easy and supposedly revolutionary method but provided no solution for the difficult problem of combating bourgeois-democratic influence within the working-class movement. To go that way was in reality to skip difficulties.

Lenin said:

The Communists . . . must learn to create a new, unusual, nonopportunistic, noncareerist parliamentarism; the Communist parties must issue their slogans; real proletarians, with the help of the unorganized and downtrodden poor, should scatter and distribute leaflets, canvass workers' houses and the cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages (fortunately there are many times less remote villages in Europe than in Russia, and in England the number is very small); they should go into the most common taverns, penetrate into the unions, societies and casual meetings where the common people gather, and talk to the people, not in learned (and not in very parliamentary) language; they should not at all strive to "get seats" in parliament, but should everywhere strive to rouse the minds of the masses and draw them into the struggle, to hold the bourgeoisie to its word and utilize the apparatus it has set up, the elections it has appointed, the appeals it has made to the whole people, and to tell the people what Bolshevism is. . . .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 427-28.

## THE COMPROMISES OF A REVOLUTIONARY AND THE COMPROMISES OF A TRAITOR

The "Left" Communists also advanced the slogan: "No compromises!" They said that all compromises with other parties and all policies involving manoeuvring were incorrect, exceedingly dangerous and should be resolutely rejected. Lenin criticized this harmful idea of opposing compromises "on principle", and saw it as an expression of childishness which it was difficult to take seriously. Throughout the history of Bolshevism, there were many instances of compromise. As far back as 1901-02, before Bolshevism emerged, the old editorial board of *Iskra* in which Lenin participated had concluded a political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism. In 1907 during the Duma elections, for a brief period the Bolsheviks had entered into a political bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Between 1903 and 1912, they had been formally united with the Mensheviks in one Social-Democratic Party. During World War I, the Bolsheviks had met with the Kautskyites and their like at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences and had issued joint manifestoes. At the time of the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks had adopted the Socialist-Revolutionary agrarian programme in its entirety without a single alteration. All these were compromises. Through such compromises, the Bolsheviks had united with these forces, in given conditions for a limited period of time, against the common enemy. However, the Bolsheviks had never allowed themselves to be restricted by these political forces ideologically or politically, and they never ceased pitilessly to expose and combat their errors. Lenin compared the experience

which the Communist Party, as the vanguard of the proletariat, had to undergo in its revolutionary activity, and especially in the struggle for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, to the difficult ascent of an unexplored and previously inaccessible mountain. There could be no straight and direct high road; many zigzags and intermediate stations had to be negotiated to arrive at the final destination. In other words, the Party's tactics had to include the use of manoeuvre, agreement and compromise. However, these tactics had to be used in such a way as not to lower but to raise the general level of proletarian class consciousness, revolutionary spirit and ability to fight and win; they had to be used in such a way as to consolidate and strengthen the proletarian forces while weakening and disintegrating the enemy.

The "Left" Communists opposed the revolutionary compromises of the Bolsheviks, while the opportunists tried to cover up their own betrayal by distorting various examples of such compromises. To educate the revolutionaries as well as to make a counter-attack against the opportunists, Lenin repeatedly explained the two different kinds of compromises. He said:

Every proletarian — owing to the conditions of the mass struggle and the sharp intensification of class antagonisms in which he lives — notices the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, extreme hunger and exhaustion), a compromise which in no way diminishes the revolutionary devotion and readiness for further struggle on the part of the workers who have agreed to such a compromise, and a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to outside causes

their own selfishness (strikebreakers also enter into "compromises"!); cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery on the part of the capitalists.<sup>1</sup>

In the former case, the compromise is partial, non-fundamental and temporary, designed to gain time to reorganize the forces and prepare for heroic, fearless attacks against the enemy. In the latter case, the compromise is treacherous, leading to the abandonment of the fundamental interests of the proletariat. Lenin cited the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty by the Bolsheviks as an example, explaining that this was a revolutionary and absolutely correct compromise which left no room whatever for opportunist misinterpretation; whereas the opportunists by their compromises with the capitalist-imperialist robbers made themselves accomplices in bourgeois banditry and betrayed the basic interests of the proletariat. The attempts to confuse the compromises of the opportunists with the compromises of the revolutionaries were inept and contemptible. Lenin said:

A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must know how to single out *concrete* cases when such compromises are inadmissible, when they are an expression of opportunism and *treachery*, and direct all the force of criticism, the full edge of merciless exposure and relentless war, against *those concrete* compromises, and not allow the past masters at "practical" Socialism and the parlia-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.

mentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by disquisitions on "compromises in general."<sup>1</sup>

#### REVOLUTIONARY FERVOUR AND COOLNESS OF MIND

The victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia and its ever wider impact throughout the world had incensed the bourgeoisie of Russia and the world over, almost to the point of frenzy. On the one hand they used force to suppress revolution, on the other they started an all-round attack on Bolshevism. They founded all sorts of richly endowed organizations, hired any number of extra scholars, sensation-mongers and priests, published numerous books, magazines and newspapers and shrieked at the Bolsheviks in every key. The bourgeoisie and its accomplices thought that they could stifle the truth with guns and verbal attacks, but things turned out contrary to their wishes. Their very campaigns induced wider sections of the people to explore the truth. Lenin commented on their folly in these terms:

. . . we must bow and thank the capitalist gentry. They are working for us. They are helping us to get the masses interested in the nature and significance of Bolshevism. And they cannot do otherwise; for they have *already* failed to stifle Bolshevism, to "ignore" it.<sup>2</sup>

The "Left" Communists showed their petty-bourgeois revolutionism in the face of the furious enemy attacks. They decided revolutionary tactics solely by emotion, led the masses solely by emotion, and they mistook their

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

subjective desires for objective reality. When he analysed the social origin of this kind of mental reaction, Lenin said:

. . . the small owner, the small master . . . , who under capitalism always suffers oppression and, very often, an incredibly acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions, and ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organization, discipline and steadfastness. The petty bourgeois "driven to frenzy" by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, its liability to become swiftly transformed into submission, apathy, fantasy, and even a "frenzied" infatuation with one or another bourgeois "fad" — all this is a matter of common knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin remarked that the temper of the "Left" Communists in some respects expresses the hatred of the oppressed and exploited masses for the bourgeoisie and this temper is highly valuable. But revolutionary fervour alone is not enough for deciding revolutionary tactics, which require a sober and most objective assessment of all the class forces, both in the given country and on a world scale, and also a scrutinizing of the experience of many other revolutionary movements. He said that "politics is a science and an art that does not drop from the skies", that "it is not obtained gratis", and that "the proletariat, if it wants to conquer the bourgeoisie, must train its *own*, proletarian 'class politicians' ".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 353-54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

The political representatives of the proletariat have to be able to utilize the contradictions of the enemy and win over the greatest possible number of allies. Lenin said:

The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and *without fail*, most thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully using every, even the smallest, "rift" among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who fail to understand this, fail to understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern socialism *in general*.<sup>1</sup>

Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough to educate the millions upon millions of people politically; the masses needed their own political experience. Lenin said that to lead the masses to the final and decisive battle, "we must not only ask ourselves whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes — positively of all the classes of the given society without exception — are aligned in such a way that everything is fully ripe for the decisive battle".<sup>2</sup> He also said:

To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 423.

taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it, and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy, would be not merely folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the working people and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The political representatives of the proletariat have to have firm confidence in the cause of communism and a most intense passion for it, and at the same time they have to be cool and collected in practical struggle. Furthermore, they have to be able to combine these qualities. Lenin said:

Life will assert itself. Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance, and endeavour to kill off (in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) more hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of yesterday's and tomorrow's Bolsheviks. In acting thus, the bourgeoisie is acting as all classes doomed by history have acted.<sup>2</sup>

Everywhere and in every case communism was becoming tempered and was growing; its roots were so deep that persecution did not weaken or debilitate it, but strengthened it. Communists of all countries must have the firm belief that whatever happens the future is theirs.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 431.



In the midst of the great revolutionary struggles, it is necessary for them to make a full estimate of the frenzied attacks of the bourgeoisie. They have to combine the most intense fervour with the coolest and soberest calculation, to combine the high sense of principle of boundless devotion to the communist cause with the utmost flexibility of tactics, in order to march forward to victory with still greater confidence and firmness.





18. THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION TO THE NEW  
ECONOMIC POLICY; THE STRUGGLE AGAINST  
THE OPPORTUNIST FACTIONS OF TROTSKY,  
BUKHARIN AND OTHERS

THE SITUATION AND TASKS DURING THE PERIOD OF  
NATIONAL ECONOMIC RESTORATION

Shortly after the October Revolution Lenin placed on the agenda the great task of organizing the socialist economy. In "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" he wrote:

We have *won* Russia from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the toilers. Now we must *administer* Russia. . . .

. . . We must prove worthy executors of this most difficult (and most grateful) task of the socialist revolution. We must *ponder over the fact* that *in addition* to being able to convince people, in addition to being able to conquer in civil war, it is necessary to be able to do practical *organisational* work in order that the administration may be successful. It is a very difficult task, because it is a matter of organising in a new way the most deep-rooted, the economic foundations of life of tens and tens of millions of people. And it is a very grateful task because, *only after* it has been *fulfilled* (in the principal and main outlines) will it be possible

to say that Russia *has become* not only a Soviet, but also a Socialist Republic.<sup>1</sup>

However, the work of economic construction was interrupted by foreign armed intervention and civil war. It was not until 1921 that the Party resumed the work of restoring the national economy and undertaking socialist construction.

The economic situation was then a good deal worse. Following four years of the imperialist war and three years of civil war, production was seriously damaged and there was an acute shortage of food and fuel. War Communism, introduced in the years of civil war, was now in conflict with the interests of the peasantry, and the workers, too, were dissatisfied. Obviously, a new policy responding to the changed conditions was needed.

Lenin declared that the immediate task was to revive industry on the basis of the restoration of agriculture and to build up a new economic foundation for the alliance of the workers and peasants. To revive agriculture it was necessary to replace the surplus-appropriation system introduced in the period of War Communism by a tax in kind, to expand the circulation of commodities on a countrywide scale and to allow certain freedom for private trade. The peasants would then be more interested and active, and a quick restoration of agriculture could be expected, on the basis of which industry would revive and develop. This, in turn, would provide the material conditions for the remoulding of the individual peasants.

As early as 1918, in his "‘Left-Wing’ Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", Lenin had analysed the

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, pp. 316-17.

economic structure of Russia in the transition period, pointing out that there were five economic forms in Russia—the patriarchal, natural economy, the small commodity production of the individual peasants, private capitalism, state capitalism, and socialism. He later classified them into three basic forms, i.e., capitalism, small commodity production, and socialism, represented respectively by the three social forces of the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie (peasantry) and the proletariat. During the transition period, the struggle of “Who will win?” went on between socialism and capitalism, and socialism could achieve victory only when the proletariat defeated capitalism and all small commodity production was taken into the orbit of the large-scale socialist economy. The New Economic Policy, which became operative with the implementation of the tax in kind, was a policy for ensuring the establishment of socialist economic foundations. On the initiative of Lenin, the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted the New Economic Policy and Lenin fully explained it in “The Tax in Kind”. As Stalin said, the New Economic Policy was “a special policy of the proletarian state aimed at permitting capitalism while the commanding positions are held by the proletarian state, aimed at a struggle between the capitalist and socialist elements, aimed at increasing the role of the socialist elements to the detriment of the capitalist elements, aimed at the victory of the socialist elements over the capitalist elements, aimed at the abolition of classes and the building of the foundations of a socialist economy”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stalin, “The Fourteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B.)”, *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 7, p. 374.

There was ideological confusion and political wavering among quite a number of people when Party policy made this momentous change. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Trotsky opened up an attack on the Party and maliciously provoked a great debate. This was followed by a campaign against Lenin launched by opportunist groups of various hues, such as the "Left Communists" headed by Bukharin, the "Workers' Opposition" and the "Democratic-Centralists".

#### THE DEBATE OVER THE QUESTION OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The debate started over the question of the trade unions. However, the trade unions were not in fact the main question confronting Party policy at that time, and the debate went far beyond the trade union question. The actual point at issue was "the policy to be adopted towards the peasantry, who were rising against War Communism, the policy to be adopted towards the mass of the non-Party workers, and, in general, what was to be the approach of the Party to the masses in the period when the Civil War was coming to an end", as was later pointed out in the resolution of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), adopted in January 1925.<sup>1</sup>

In order to revive the national economy, the masses of the workers had to be induced to rally ever more closely around the Party and the Soviet government and take an

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, Moscow, 1951, p. 389.

active part in restoring and developing industry. Undoubtedly, this would have to be done by the Party and the trade unions by the method of persuasion. Trotsky, however, demanded a "shaking up" of the trade unions, regarding them as government bodies, and he urged the introduction of coercion and military methods. His policy was aimed at setting the worker masses against the Party and splitting the working class. Lenin said:

If the Party splits with the trade unions, then it is the Party's fault, and Soviet power will be sure to perish. We have no mainstay other than the millions of proletarians. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In criticizing Trotsky, Lenin explained the nature and role of the trade unions, and the relations of the trade unions to the state, the Party and the proletariat. He defined the trade unions as "schools of administration, schools of management, schools of Communism".<sup>2</sup> The trade union was the bridge linking the Party and the working class. Lenin said:

. . . the organisations which embrace the whole class cannot directly effect the proletarian dictatorship. The dictatorship can be effected only by the vanguard which has absorbed into itself the revolutionary energy of the class.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Report on the Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions at a Meeting of the Communist Fraction of the Second All-Russian Mineworkers' Congress", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 32, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 9, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.



Though Bukharin formed a "buffer" group in this debate he actually supported Trotsky's opposition to Lenin. Lenin said that what Bukharin did was to pour kerosene on the fire and call it "buffer kerosene".

In the course of the debate Trotsky attacked Lenin, saying that Lenin approached the question "politically", while he approached it "economically" and was "concerned about production". Bukharin took an eclectic stand, declaring that it was of equal value to approach it either "economically" or "politically", and that Lenin and Trotsky had each overemphasized one aspect of the question. Lenin refuted these erroneous views and in his "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", he provided a profound explanation of the dialectical relationship between politics and economics. He wrote:

Politics are the concentrated expression of economics, I repeated in my speech, because I had already heard this totally unjustified — and from the lips of a Marxist totally impermissible — reproach about my "political" approach before. Politics cannot but have precedence over economics. To argue differently means forgetting the A B C of Marxism.

.....

... the *only* way the matter stands (and it is the only way the matter *can* stand from the Marxian point of view) is that without a proper political approach to the subject the given class cannot maintain its rule, and *consequently* cannot solve *its own production problems*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 9, pp. 54, 55.

## REFUTING THE ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST DEVIATION

On the heels of Trotsky in his campaign against Lenin came the "Workers' Opposition", an anarcho-syndicalist factional group. Though they were apparently at opposite poles the "Workers' Opposition" and Trotsky joined forces. The latter was trying to disintegrate the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat through the "governmentalization of the trade unions", while the former was aiming to abolish the leadership of the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat through the transfer of all economic management to an "All-Russian Producers' Congress".

Lenin said that syndicalism transferred the management of branches of industry to the masses of non-Party workers, who were divided according to industry, "thus destroying the need for the Party, and without carrying on prolonged work either in training the masses or in *actually* concentrating in *their* hands the management of *the whole of national economy*".<sup>1</sup> He further said:

In order to govern, it is necessary to have an army of steeled communist revolutionaries; this exists and is called the Party. All the syndicalist nonsense — the stipulation that candidates must be producers — all this should be thrown into the waste-paper basket.<sup>2</sup>

At the Tenth Congress of the Party Lenin went further in repudiating these deviations. He said that what the

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<sup>1</sup> "The Party Crisis", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 9, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> "Report on the Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions at a Meeting of the Communist Fraction of the Second All-Russian Mineworkers' Congress", *op. cit.*, p. 41.

syndicalists advocated represented a complete departure from Marxism. This was because:

Firstly, the concept "producer" combines proletarians with semiproletarians and small commodity producers, thus radically departing from the fundamental concept of the class struggle and from the fundamental demand for drawing a precise distinction between classes.

Secondly, banking on the non-Party masses, flirting with them . . . is no less a radical departure from Marxism.<sup>1</sup>

To cover up its anarcho-syndicalist stand, the "Workers' Opposition" defended itself by quoting Engels' point of view on the union of producers. Lenin pointed out that it was utterly impossible for the "Workers' Opposition" to defend its point on the basis of Engels' thesis, "because it is quite obvious, and an exact quotation of the corresponding passage will prove, that Engels talked about Communist society, in which there would be no classes. This is indisputable to all of us. When there will be no classes in society there will be only producers; there will be no workers and peasants. And we know perfectly well from all the works of Marx and Engels that they drew a very clear distinction between the period in which classes still exist and the period in which they will no longer exist. Marx and Engels pitilessly ridiculed all ideas, talk and assumptions about the disappearance of classes before Communism. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Preliminary Draft of the Resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party on the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> "Party Unity and the Anarcho-Syndicalist Deviation", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 9, p. 124.

Lenin analysed the origin of the anarcho-syndicalist deviation. He said:

The said deviation is due partly to the influx into the Party of former Mensheviks and also of workers and peasants who have not yet fully assimilated the communist world outlook; mainly, however, this deviation is due to the influence exercised upon the proletariat and on the Russian Communist Party by the petty-bourgeois element. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The Party organizations rallied closely around Lenin during his debate with Trotsky, Bukharin and the "Workers' Opposition" and it ended with the defeat of these opportunist groups. In March 1921, the Tenth Congress of the Party summarized the debate over the trade union question and adopted resolutions on "Party Unity" and "The Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party", both of which had been drafted by Lenin.

#### GETTING THE PEASANTS TO TAKE THE SOCIALIST ROAD VIA CO-OPERATION

Lenin always maintained the view that after gaining political power, the proletariat must lead the peasant masses to embark on the road to socialism by way of collectivization. After the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) he went further in the concrete study of this question and put forward a plan

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<sup>1</sup> "Preliminary Draft of the Resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party on the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party", *op. cit.*, p. 502.

for co-operatives which was designed to induce the peasants to join in the building of socialism.

Diametrically opposed to Lenin's views on this question were those of the Right and "Left" opportunists. The Right opportunists held that the proletariat should not raise the question of the seizure of power and the socialization of the means of production until after capitalism had concentrated the agricultural means of production by ruining the millions of peasants and turning them into farm labourers. The "Left" opportunists maintained that after assuming power the proletariat should turn the means of production of the small peasants into public property by the method of expropriation.

These ridiculous notions of the opportunists were refuted by Lenin in "The Tax in Kind", and in his last works, such as "On Co-operation", "Our Revolution", and "Better Fewer, But Better".

Stalin outlined Lenin's thesis as follows:

a) Favourable conditions for the assumption of power should not be missed — the proletariat should assume power without waiting until capitalism succeeded in ruining the millions of small and medium individual producers;

b) The means of production in industry should be expropriated and converted into public property;

c) As to the small and medium individual producers, they should be gradually united in producers' co-operatives, i.e., in large agricultural enterprises, collective farms;

d) Industry should be developed to the utmost and the collective farms should be placed on the modern technical basis of large-scale production, not expro-

priating them, but on the contrary generously supplying them with first-class tractors and other machines;

e) In order to ensure an economic bond between town and country, between industry and agriculture, commodity production (exchange through purchase and sale) should be preserved for a certain period, it being the form of economic tie with the town which is *alone acceptable* to the peasants, and Soviet trade — state, cooperative, and collective-farm — should be developed to the full and the capitalists of all types and descriptions ousted from trading activity.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's co-operative plan was a great programme for inducing the peasant masses to take the socialist road under working-class leadership and build socialism together with the working class.

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<sup>1</sup>Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, pp. 16-17.

## 19. RESOLUTE SUPPORT FOR THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

### THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES MUST SUPPORT WORLD REVOLUTION

The October Revolution gave a great impetus to the international proletarian revolution and the national-liberation movements in the colonial and dependent countries. As Stalin said, the October Revolution "*erected a bridge between the socialist West and the enslaved East*, having created a new front of revolutions *against* world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian revolution, to the oppressed peoples of the East".<sup>1</sup> The October Revolution ushered in a new era, i.e., "the era of *proletarian* revolutions in the countries of *imperialism*", "the era of *colonial* revolutions which are being carried out *in the oppressed countries* of the world *in alliance* with the proletariat and *under the leadership* of the proletariat".<sup>2</sup>

After the October Revolution Lenin repeatedly stated that the defence of the Soviet Republic and the building of socialism would be of paramount importance in pro-

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<sup>1</sup> Stalin, "The October Revolution and the National Question", *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 4, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin, "The International Character of the October Revolution", *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 10, pp. 246, 248.

moting the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations. But he never suggested that the building of the Soviet state could replace the liberation struggles of the peoples of the world.

In the thick of the civil war, Lenin said:

... our problem now is—to support, defend and preserve this force of socialism, this socialist torch, this source of socialism that actively influences the whole world; this problem, in the present situation, is a military one.<sup>1</sup>

When the civil war had almost been brought to an end he said that the victorious proletariat was capable of building communism, affirming that “this task is of world-wide significance”,<sup>2</sup> and that communist economic construction in Russia “will become a model for the socialist Europe and Asia of the future”.<sup>3</sup> When the Soviet state began to embark on peaceful construction Lenin made socialist economic construction the main task for the Soviet state, saying, “At present we are exerting our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Speech at the Joint Meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, the Factory and Works Committees and Trade Unions of Moscow on July 29, 1918”, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 28, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> “Our External and Internal Situation and the Tasks of the Party”, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 31, p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> “Report on the Work of the Council of People’s Commissars, Delivered at the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, December 22, 1920”, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 31, p. 486.

<sup>4</sup> “Speech at the Conclusion of the Tenth All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P. (B.)”, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 32, p. 413.



The building of socialism, a system far superior to capitalism, in countries where proletarian revolution has been victorious, will promote the world revolution, and, likewise, only the world revolution can ensure that socialism will achieve final victory in these countries. Lenin again and again emphasized:

... our cause is an international cause, and until a revolution is accomplished in all states — and this includes the richest and most civilized states — our victory will be only half a victory, or perhaps even less.<sup>1</sup>

... capital, by the very nature of the case, cannot be defeated to the end in one country. It is an international force and in order to defeat it to the end the joint action of the workers is necessary on an international scale as well.<sup>2</sup>

... the final victory of socialism in a single country is impossible.<sup>3</sup>

The Congress sees the most reliable guarantee for the consolidation of the socialist revolution that has triumphed in Russia only in its transformation into an international workers' revolution.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Speech at the Commemorative Meeting of the Moscow Soviet, the Moscow Committee of the R.C.P. (B.) and the Moscow Provincial Trade Union Council for the Third Anniversary of the October Revolution, Nov. 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 31, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> "Speech at the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Clothing Workers, February 6, 1921", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 32, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> "The Activities of the Council of People's Commissars, Report Delivered to the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, January 24 [11], 1918", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 280.

<sup>4</sup> "Resolution on War and Peace, Seventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, p. 95.

The opportunists of the Second International and the leaders of certain self-styled Communist Parties substituted national egoism and pacifism for proletarian internationalism. Lenin scathingly condemned this kind of treachery, saying:

I must argue, not from the point of view of "my" country (for this is the argument of a poor, stupid, nationalist philistine who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of *my share* in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution.

This is what internationalism is, and this is the duty of the internationalist, of the revolutionary worker, of the genuine Socialist. This is the ABC that Kautsky the renegade has "forgotten".<sup>1</sup>

Bolshevik tactics were based not on fear of world revolution, nor on the philistine feelings of "disbelief" in such a revolution, but on correct assessment of the world revolutionary situation. Lenin put forward two fundamental principles of proletarian internationalism:

. . . firstly, the subordination of the interests of the proletarian struggle in one country to the interests of the struggle on a world scale; and secondly, it calls for the ability and readiness on the part of the nations which are achieving victory over the bourgeoisie to make the greatest national sacrifices for the sake of overthrowing international capital.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 7, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, pp. 235-36.

Lenin was fiercely opposed to the tendency of great-power chauvinism on the part of a socialist country. He said that "it is our duty . . . to combat very vigorously the survivals (sometimes unconscious) of Great Russian imperialism and chauvinism among 'Russian' Communists",<sup>1</sup> and that "I declare war to the death against great-Russian chauvinism. As soon as I get rid of this accursed tooth, I will eat it up with all my sound teeth".<sup>2</sup>

Revolution cannot be exported and the liberation of the peoples of the various countries is their own affair. This is the view firmly held by all true Communists since the time of Marx. But a socialist country must be in sympathy with and give support to the cause of the people's liberation in all countries. Setting an example in the performance of this proletarian-internationalist duty, Lenin formulated the international policy of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet government. In a rough draft of the Party Programme which Lenin drew up for the Seventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.), he stressed the "support of the revolutionary movement of the socialist proletariat in the advanced countries" and "support of the democratic and revolutionary movement in all countries in general, and particularly in the colonies and dependent countries".<sup>3</sup> In the resolution he drafted for the congress, Lenin wrote that "the socialist proletariat of Russia will with all its strength and by all means at its disposal support the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> "Note to the Politbureau Concerning the Struggle Against Great-Nation Chauvinism", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 33, p. 335.

<sup>3</sup> "Rough Draft of a Programme", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 8, p. 334.

fraternal revolutionary movement of the proletariat of all countries".<sup>1</sup>

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED NATIONS OF THE WORLD,  
UNITE, OPPOSE THE COMMON ENEMY!

The opportunists of the Second International cut the links between the national-liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolutionary movement in the capitalist-imperialist countries, regarding the former as of little importance to the latter. Lenin to the contrary held that "the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie — no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries against international imperialism".<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, the proletariat in the capitalist countries "will not be victorious without the aid of the toiling masses of all the oppressed colonial peoples, and of the Eastern peoples in the first place".<sup>3</sup> On the other, the liberation struggles of the oppressed nations are able to develop smoothly only when they are linked up with the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles of the international proletariat. In the "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" Lenin wrote that the Soviet Russian Republic "is inevitably

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<sup>1</sup> "Resolution on War and Peace, Seventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

grouping around itself the Soviet movement of the advanced workers of all countries, as well as all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities".<sup>1</sup> Also, he stated:

. . . the cornerstone of the whole policy of the Communist International in the national and colonial question must be to bring together the proletarians and the masses of the toilers of all nations and countries for the joint revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the landlords and the bourgeoisie; for this alone guarantees victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin considered entirely correct the slogan put forward by the Communist International — Workers and oppressed nations of the world, unite!

The opportunists of the Second International paid only lip-service to the condemnation of imperialism. They talked glibly about internationalism but in fact gave no support to the revolutionary struggles in the colonies and semi-colonies. Lenin mercilessly exposed the hypocrisy of the parties of the Second International. He said:

Those English, French, Dutch, Belgian, etc., parties which are hostile to imperialism in words, but which in deeds fail to wage a revolutionary struggle within "their own" colonies for the *overthrow* of "their own" bourgeoisie, do not systematically assist the *revolutionary* work already commenced everywhere in the colonies, and do not send arms and literature to the revolu-

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

tionary parties in the colonies, are parties of scoundrels and traitors.<sup>1</sup>

He also said:

Every party that wishes to affiliate to the Third International must ruthlessly expose the tricks of "their" imperialists in the colonies; they must support not merely in words but by deeds, every liberation movement in the colonies, demand the expulsion of their imperialists from these colonies, imbue the hearts of the workers of their respective countries with a truly fraternal attitude toward the toiling population of the colonies and of oppressed nationalities, and carry on systematic agitation among the armed forces of their own country against all oppression of colonial peoples.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE PROLETARIAT MUST LEAD THE NATIONAL- DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

After making a scientific analysis of the socio-economic and class conditions in the colonial and backward countries, Lenin arrived at the belief that the proletariat in these countries must lead the peasantry in the national-democratic revolutionary movement, and that it must also unite with the bourgeoisie but at the same time maintain its independence. The proletarian parties in these countries must creatively apply the general principles of Marxism to the concrete conditions in their respective

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<sup>1</sup>"The Tasks of the Third International", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 29, p. 467.

<sup>2</sup>"The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 203.

countries and correctly resolve the problems that arise in the course of the revolution.

Lenin pointed out that feudal relations were predominant in the colonies and backward countries and the peasant masses constituted the bulk of the population. It was also necessary to oppose feudalism in these countries, as well as imperialism. He said:

. . . it is necessary to render special assistance to the peasant movement in the backward countries against the landlords, against large landownership, against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism; to strive to give the peasant movement the most revolutionary character. . . .<sup>1</sup>

He said further:

It would be utopian to think that proletarian parties . . . could pursue Communist tactics and a Communist policy in these backward countries without having definite relations with the peasant movement and without effectively supporting it.<sup>2</sup>

Lenin made a profound analysis of the dual character of the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries. He said:

A certain rapprochement has been brought about between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and those of the colonial countries, so that very often, even in the majority of cases, perhaps, where the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries does support the national

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<sup>1</sup> "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> "The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions at the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, pp. 240-41.

movement, it simultaneously works in harmony with the imperialist bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, it joins the latter in fighting against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes.<sup>1</sup>

While uniting with the bourgeoisie that supports the national-liberation movement, the proletariat must oppose its readiness to compromise. Lenin said:

. . . the Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement even in its most rudimentary form. . . .<sup>2</sup>

He also said:

. . . we Communists should, and will, support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonial countries only when these movements are really revolutionary, when the representatives of these movements do not hinder us in training and organising the peasants and the broad masses of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit. Even if these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must fight against the reformist bourgeoisie, among which we include the heroes of the Second International.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions", *op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> "The Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions at the Second Congress of the Communist International", *op. cit.*, p. 241.



Lenin analysed the new historical conditions under which liberation struggles were being waged in the colonial and backward countries after the October Revolution. He pointed out that if the revolutionary, victorious proletariat carried on systematic propaganda among them, if the Soviet governments rendered them all the assistance they possibly could, and — under these conditions — if the proletariat and its parties in those countries firmly took the leadership of the national-democratic revolution into their own hands and carried it to complete victory, then the backward countries might pass over to the Soviet system and, after a definite stage of development, go on to communism, without passing through the capitalist stage of development.

THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD WILL BE DECIDED  
BY THE PEOPLE, THE GREAT MAJORITY  
OF ITS POPULATION

The opportunists of the Second International and those in Russia constantly used the argument that "Russia has not attained the level of development of productive forces that makes Socialism possible",<sup>1</sup> and denied the possibility of achieving socialism in economically backward Russia. They held that socialism was possible only when an economic and cultural level corresponding to that of the developed capitalist countries of Western Europe had been attained.

Lenin ridiculed the "heroes" of the Second International and their Russian counterparts, saying:

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Lenin in "Our Revolution", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 726.

They all call themselves Marxists, but their conception of Marxism is impossibly pedantic. They have completely failed to understand what is decisive in Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics.<sup>1</sup>

Taking advantage of the revolutionary situation created by the first imperialist world war, economically backward Russia made its socialist revolution ahead of the economically advanced countries in Western Europe, and this is a special feature of the Russian revolution. To the opportunists of the Second International Lenin replied:

You say that civilization is necessary for the building of Socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites of civilization in our country as the expulsion of the landlords and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards Socialism?<sup>2</sup>

This was so in Russia, and it would be so in the East which was even more backward than Russia. Lenin said:

Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater peculiarities than the Russian revolution.<sup>3</sup>

It was with such confidence that Lenin assessed the revolutions in the Eastern countries. He firmly believed that the people of the colonial and dependent countries would certainly rise up against imperialist oppression, achieve their own liberation and become an important

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<sup>1</sup> "Our Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 724.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 727.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 727-28.

force in the world revolutionary movement. He said that anti-imperialist national-liberation wars were inevitable under imperialism.

. . . weak as they [the peoples of the East] may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who employ in the struggle all the marvels of technology and the art of war — nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the millions of toilers and exploited, harbours within it such potentialities, such miracles, that the emancipation of the peoples of the East is now quite practicable. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In the article "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", Lenin wrote:

. . . every day of the awakening to life and struggle of new classes in the East (Japan, India and China) — i.e., the hundreds of millions of human beings who form the greater part of the population of the world and whose historical passivity and historical torpor have hitherto been conditions responsible for stagnation and decay in many advanced European countries — every day of the awakening to life of new peoples and new classes serves as a fresh confirmation of Marxism.<sup>2</sup>

The future of the world will be decided by the people, the great majority of its population. Lenin said:

World imperialism must fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in

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<sup>1</sup> *Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Marx — Engels — Marxism*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 481.

each country, overcoming the resistance of the petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper stratum of the labour aristocracy, will unite with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who up to now have stood outside of history and have been regarded merely as the object of history.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin pointed out, in "Better Fewer, But Better":

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And it is precisely this majority that, during the past few years, has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of Socialism is fully and absolutely assured.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International", *Selected Works*, London, Vol. 10, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>*Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 750.

## CONCLUSION

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said, "Marxism can only develop through struggle—this is true not only in the past and present, it is necessarily true in the future also."<sup>1</sup>

The great Lenin spent his life in resolute and acute struggle against revisionist and opportunist trends in all their manifestations. He wrote:

Such is my fate. One militant campaign after another against political stupidities, vulgarities, opportunism, etc.

This ever since 1893. And the hatred of the philistines resulting from it. Well, anyhow I would not exchange this fate for "peace" with the philistines.<sup>2</sup>

It was through the fight against revisionism, opportunism and various other bourgeois trends that Lenin defended Marxism and carried it forward to a new historical stage, namely, the stage of Leninism.

Stalin said:

. . . Leninism was born, grew up and became strong in relentless struggle against opportunism of every

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<sup>1</sup> "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1960, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> "Letter to Inessa Armand, December 18, 1916", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 35, p. 209.

brand, including Centrism in the West (Kautsky) and Centrism in our country (Trotsky, etc.).<sup>1</sup>

He also said:

What is contained in Lenin's method was in the main already contained in the teachings of Marx, which, according to Marx himself, were "in essence critical and revolutionary". It is precisely this critical and revolutionary spirit that pervades Lenin's method from beginning to end. But it would be wrong to suppose that Lenin's method is merely the restoration of the method of Marx. As a matter of fact, Lenin's method is not only the restoration, but also the concretisation and further development of the critical and revolutionary method of Marx, of his materialist dialectics.<sup>2</sup>

Again he said:

Lenin was, and remains, the most loyal and consistent pupil of Marx and Engels, and he wholly and completely based himself on the principles of Marxism.

But Lenin did not merely carry out the teaching of Marx and Engels. He was at the same time the continuer of that teaching.

What does that mean?

It means that he developed further the teaching of Marx and Engels in conformity with the new conditions of development, with the new phase of capitalism, with imperialism. It means that in developing further the teaching of Marx in the new conditions of the class

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<sup>1</sup> Stalin, "Some Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism", *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 13, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 0, pp. 90-91.

struggle, Lenin contributed something new to the general treasury of Marxism as compared with what was created by Marx and Engels, with what could be created in the pre-imperialist period of capitalism; at the same time Lenin's new contribution to the treasury of Marxism is wholly and completely based on the principles laid down by Marx and Engels.

It is in this sense that we speak of Leninism as Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions.<sup>1</sup>

The contradictions between Marxism-Leninism on the one hand and revisionism and opportunism on the other are irreconcilable. The struggle against revisionism and opportunism is an inseparable part of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and an inseparable part of the people's liberation struggle throughout the world against imperialist enslavement. Without protracted, resolute and unyielding struggle against revisionism and opportunism, there can be no talk about persistence in Marxism-Leninism and opposition to capitalist-imperialism, nor any possibility of victory in the proletarian revolution, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism and the transition to communism.

The revisionist and opportunist factions will never disappear of themselves, nor will they see their errors and mend their ways. Lenin said:

The relatively "peaceful" character of the period between 1871 and 1914 served to foster opportunism first

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<sup>1</sup> Stalin, "Interview with the First American Labour Delegation", *Works*, Moscow, Vol. 10, pp. 97-98.

as a *mood*, then as a *trend*, until finally it formed a *group or stratum* among the labour bureaucracy and petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers.<sup>1</sup>

He also said:

Certain individuals among the present social-chauvinist leaders may return to the proletariat; but the social chauvinist, or (what is the same thing) opportunist *trend* can neither disappear nor "return" to the revolutionary proletariat.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the growth and collapse of the revisionism and opportunism of the Second International proves that revisionist and opportunist factions, as agencies of the bourgeoisie, become more and more hostile to Marxism-Leninism and revolution with the sharpening of the class struggle and the development of the revolutionary movements of the proletariat and the toiling masses.

The revisionist faction is a sworn enemy of Marxism, yet it swears by the name of Marx. Lenin said:

You cannot prevent it from doing so any more than a trading firm can be prevented from using any label, any sign, any advertisement it pleases.<sup>3</sup>

He said on another occasion:

What is now happening to Marx's teaching has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the teach-

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<sup>1</sup> "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 22, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 349.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



ings of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes struggling for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their teachings with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to surround their *names* with a certain halo for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time emasculating the *essence* of the revolutionary teaching, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it. At the present time, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the working-class movement concur in this "doctoring" of Marxism. They omit, obliterate and distort the revolutionary side of this teaching, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup>

Marxists should be able to see through such tricks of the revisionists and opportunists, and, like Lenin, relentlessly tear off their masks, discredit them before the broad masses of the people and leave them no place to hide anywhere in the world.

Lenin taught that the winning over of the masses is the key to the struggle against revisionism and opportunism. He declared:

... it is our duty . . . if we wish to remain Socialists, to go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses:

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<sup>1</sup> "The State and Revolution", *Selected Works*, Moscow, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 202.

this is the whole meaning and the whole content of the struggle against opportunism.<sup>1</sup>

He said further:

Against the social-traitors, against reformism and opportunism, this political line can and must be followed in *all* spheres of the struggle without exception. And then we shall win the working masses. And with the working masses, the Marxist centralized political party, the vanguard of the proletariat, will take the people along the right road to the triumph of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to proletarian instead of bourgeois democracy, to the Soviet Republic, to the socialist system.<sup>2</sup>

The conflict of Marxism against revisionism and opportunism is a protracted and tortuous one. Lenin said that it "now flares up in a bright flame and now dies down and smoulders under the ashes of imposing 'truce resolutions'".<sup>3</sup> Despite the bankruptcy of the old-line revisionists and opportunists, so long as the capitalist class and imperialism exist they will always try to train new ones as their agents in the communist movement. In the early days of 1917, Lenin predicted that during the decades ahead "new Plekhanovs, new Scheidemanns, new sentimental conciliators like Kautsky will grow up from the depths of the 'united' international Social-

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<sup>1</sup> "Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement", *op. cit.*, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> *Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists*, F.L.P.H., Moscow, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 5, p. 553.

Democracy".<sup>1</sup> The lesson is that we must always be on the watch for the emergence of revisionism and opportunism of any kind and wage a persistent struggle against them.

The history of the development of the communist movement eloquently confirms the invincibility of Marxism-Leninism. It is all powerful because it is correct. Marxism-Leninism helps the proletariat to see clearly what it is struggling for and to understand the laws of changing events, so that it can march resolutely forward in the proper direction and assuredly win and consolidate victory. Although revisionists and opportunists may raise a temporary hue and cry, they do not, after all, amount to more than an adverse current in the communist movement as a whole, and they will eventually be submerged in the revolutionary torrent of Marxism-Leninism. No force has ever been able to stop Marxism-Leninism from marching onward triumphantly, and no force ever will.

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<sup>1</sup> "A Turn in World Politics", *Collected Works*, New York, Vol. XIX, p. 428.





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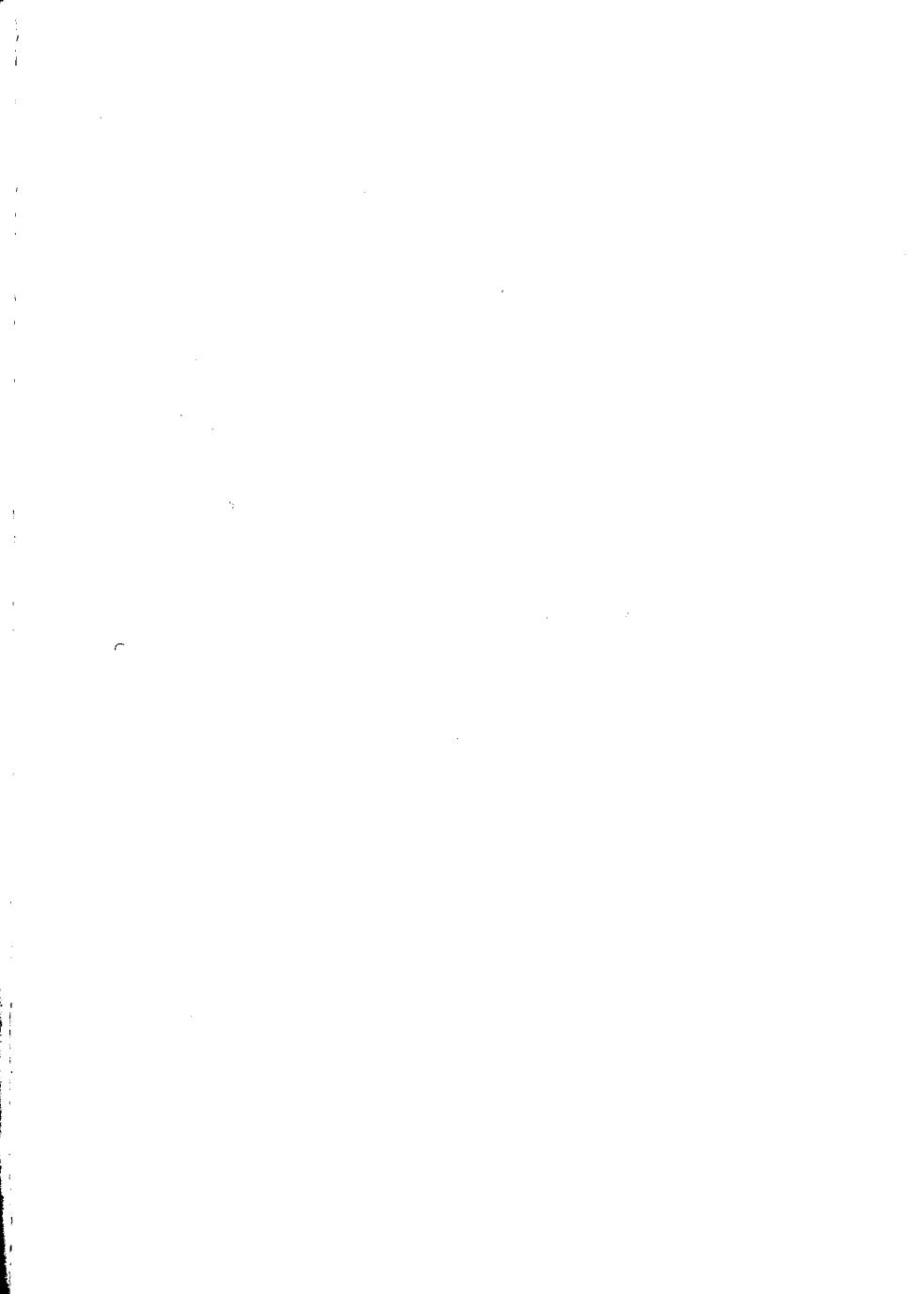
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